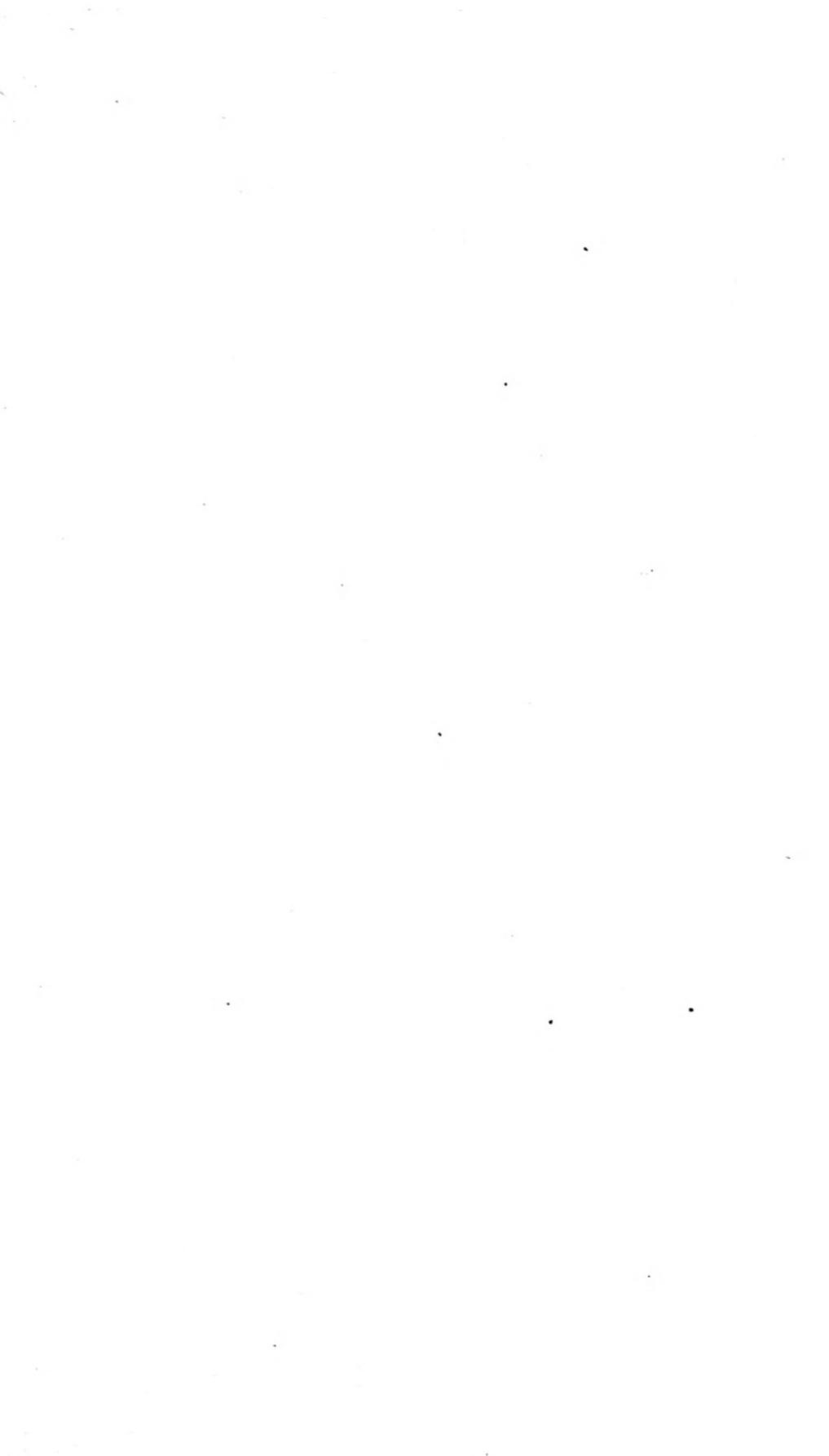


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THE FORTUNES

OF

THE FALCONARS.

VOL. III.

THE FORTUNES

OF

THE FALCONARS.

BY

MRS. GORDON,

AUTHORESS OF "THREE NIGHTS IN A LIFE-TIME," ETC.

"How seldom, Friend, a Good Great Man inherits
Honour and wealth, with all his worth and pains !
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits,
If any man obtain that which he merits,
Or any merit that which he obtains.—

For shame, dear Friend ! renounee this canting strain ;
What wouldst thou have a Good Great Man obtain ?

* * * * * * * * *

Goodness and Greatness are not *means*, but *ends*.

Hath he not always treasures—always friends—

The Good Great Man ? Three treasures—Love, and Light,
And Calm Thoughts, regular as infants' breath ?
And three sure friends,—more sure than day and night,
Himself,—his Maker,—and the ANGEL DEATH ?"

S. T. COLERIDGE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE
FORTUNES OF THE FALCONARS.

CHAPTER I.

“ *Olmers.* Als ein ehrlicher Mann hab’ ich meine Anwertung in wenig Worten ohne Schminke vorgetragen. Antworten sie mir eben so.

“ *Bürgermeister.* O ja, sie erlauben nur—ich bin *Paterfamilias*—meine Pflicht erheischt, die sämmtlichen Vetttern und Muhmien Zusammen zu berufen, und selbigen Dero Anliegen in geziemenden *terminis* vorzutragen.”—AUGUST VON KOTZEBUE.

ABOUT seven o’clock on the following morning, Alfred Falconar was awakened by some one very softly entering his room; and after remaining for a few minutes in that state of dreamy half-consciousness attendant on the dispelling of slumber, he at length roused himself sufficiently to withdraw the curtain, and to his astonishment perceived Guy Clifton. The apparition of his friend was speedily followed by a narrative of the events of the previous evening, to which Alfred listened with the most lively interest and pleasure, and at its conclusion started up, and shook him warmly by the hand.

“ My dear fellow!” he exclaimed, “ I cannot tell you the happiness this gives me. You are

the only man I ever knew, Clifton, worthy of Eleanor."

"But your mother, Falconar," said Clifton, after they had discussed the subject at some length—"I dread her decision."

"As to that," returned Alfred, "it is impossible, from my mother's opinions one day, to pronounce with any certainty what they will be the next. But I will not deceive you, Clifton. If I ever did hear her express an abiding dislike to anything, it was to engagements. We have held many an argument on that score. However, you know you may rely on the exertion of my warmest influence, and I can see no reason to apprehend your engagement being a very lengthened one, at the same time that you are both young enough to wait awhile. In short, I perceive nothing in the circumstances of the case to startle any one's prudence, though I cannot pretend to augur a like feeling on her part. But you are both perfectly right to shun any approach to clandestine conduct; and my mother cannot bind Ellen's heart, even although for a time she may her actions. Her heart, once given, is yours till death. However, ere we anticipate the worst, let us try hard for the best. Now, what are your motions to-day?"

"I fear," answered Clifton, "that I shall be occupied during the whole forenoon in various matters of business. This hasty summons leaves me much less time than I had reckoned on, and I want to have everything settled to-day. But can't you come and dine with me at six o'clock,

Falconar? Pray, do; I have so very much to say to you, and by that time I—I shall certainly have received an answer from Mrs. Falconar."

"I shall try," replied Alfred. "I, too, expect to be very busy to-day, but I shall endeavour to be at leisure by that time. If I can so contrive it, you may depend on an early reply from my mother—I trust and hope a favourable one."

The friends separated, and Alfred, springing out of bed, prepared, as he commenced his morning toilet, the sharpest weapons of his wits, in anticipation of the encounter with his mother.

It came accordingly. No sooner had Harry left the breakfast-table, which he always did earlier than the rest of the party, than Alfred proceeded to open the negotiation by presenting Clifton's letter to his mother, and, upon her perusal of that document, following up its oratory by a most eloquent appeal of his own to her maternal feelings. Mrs. Falconar read the first in silence, broken only by an occasional interjection, and heard the second half-way through with equal calmness, but further her patience did not suffice to carry her. She interrupted Alfred by a pathetic exclamation at her own hard fate in being the mother of children who were without the slightest reverence for her authority or injunctions, recapitulated all that she had said to Eleanor at the time of Mr. Charteris' rejection, with regard to encouraging Clifton, conveniently forgetting that she herself had never shewn him any discouragement, made a digression to the kindness and ungratefully-required attentions of

Mr. and Mrs. Peter, and finally concluded by expressing her resolution that “no daughter of hers should ever engage herself to a man who could not afford to marry at once, more especially to one who had had the baseness to entice her into a clandestine attachment.”

“Clandestine! my dear mother!” exclaimed Alfred, rather losing patience in his turn, “never was anything less clandestine in this world! And really, I never heard that there was any law against people, who thoroughly suited each other, becoming attached because they could not afford to marry for a year or two.”

Alfred’s interference only had the effect of diverting his mother’s wrath from Clifton to himself—in the first place, for defending his friend; in the second, for being himself utterly perverse and wrong-headed; in the third, by logical deduction from the second, for behaving improperly to herself; and in the fourth, by a like deduction from the third, for injuring his own health by sitting up too late at night. From this harangue, a brilliant exemplification of the bathos, Alfred with some difficulty brought his mother back to the starting-point, and proceeded with infinite perseverance and good temper to re-urge his arguments in favour of an engagement between his sister and his friend. Mrs. Falconar could not argue. It has been said unjustly, as we take leave to think, of her sex in general, that they are incapable of comprehending an abstract idea or proposition, but this, in her instance, certainly held true. Assertions and exclamations were her

only weapons of defence against argument, and the most provoking, as well as the most pertinacious, of weapons they are. But as we have already had occasion to remark, she was a person of no original stamina of character, and too indolent to withstand much persuasion, though often sufficiently obstinate in her resolutions. In the present case, however, the indignity of yielding the point was fairly counterbalanced by the pleasure which none but a thoroughly peevish temper can rightly estimate, of predicting every sort of evil, and taunting the recipients of her concession at every future moment that she might choose with that very concession, which she might then be able to declare had been wrung from her by insufferable importunity. After a due portion of time devoted to the task of resistance, she did, therefore, suffer herself to be prevailed on to bestow a most reluctant and ungracious consent to the engagement and correspondence of her daughter with Clifton, delivered, however, in such a manner, and with so many reservations of its being contrary to her own judgment, as too plainly disclosed to Alfred that in its future use it was likely to prove as much of a curse as a blessing. Such as it was, however, it was his business to accept it as a boon, and this he did accordingly ; and having received his mother's grudgingly-given promise of a reply to Clifton's letter in the terms agreed upon, he took his departure for the Parliament House, relying upon the speedy relief of his friend's anxieties.

It was too much to expect from human nature

—at least from Mrs. Falconar's nature—that she should condescend at once to write to Clifton. There was time enough, she decided, in the course of the morning; so she diligently applied herself to the discharge of her household duties, by ordering dinner, &c.; then discovered that there was a hole in the finger of her glove, which it was necessary to mend; and that done, found out some other impediment of a description brooking as little delay, till, in short, it was some time after twelve o'clock ere she found herself seated at the writing-table, a quire of glazed letter-paper before her, a pen in one hand and Guy's letter in the other. At this crisis the door-bell rang; the door opened,—footsteps were heard ascending the stairs, and there entered the drawing-room Aunt Annie and Aunt Elizabeth.

Adieu, therefore, to the writing of letters for the present. But, alas! adieu to more than the mere circumstance of writing the letter; its contents were likewise destined to undergo a very sweeping alteration. This opportunity for a display of maternal feeling, and of the sufferings of an affectionate parent driven to act against her better judgment by the cruel and ill-timed importunities of her undutiful children, was too precious to be lost. It has before been hinted, that Mrs. Falconar dearly loved a scene, and on the present occasion she outdid herself. Her own agonized state of mind, anxiety for her daughter's interests, dread of hurting her feelings, grievances from the headstrong wills of her family, were all expressed or implied, enlarged

upon, or passed over in gentle terms, that carried a deep meaning in their gentleness; and the letter of Guy Clifton to herself,—the eloquent letter in which he poured forth a declaration of feelings intended for no other eye, and entered into an open-hearted and unreserved detail of his private affairs and prospects, for her satisfaction alone,—was read aloud, and commented on to enforce her pathetic tale. It mattered little that his confidence and that of her daughter were betrayed to the last ears in the world to which they could have wished it imparted—that was of trifling consequence in comparison of feeling and creating a sensation. Mrs. Falconar, as she wrought herself up to the proper pitch of distress, actually felt quite happy in the idea of her own pre-eminent misery. There is a species of pantomimic sorrow which people can excite in themselves, affording a pleasant titillation to the feelings very agreeable to an indolent person; and such was hers, as she recapitulated her struggles.

“ And so,” she concluded, “ in absolute despair, not knowing what to do, and equally averse to grieving Eleanor and to injuring her worldly interests by compliance, I was at length fairly sitting down, at the time you came in, to write to Mr. Clifton, giving my most unwilling consent to this ill-advised measure of an engagement.”

“ It’s a mercy to goodness, my dear,” solemnly responded Aunt Annie, “ that Elizabeth and I came in time to prevent your doing anything so

foolish and ridiculous ! I'm shocked indeed, Lilias, to think that you could have thought for a moment of countenancing such infatuation."

" What could I do, Aunt Annie ? You have little idea of the difficulty of my position. My son Alfred——"

" Ay, ay!" groaned Aunt Annie, " Alfred is a very imprudent young man. Any brother but himself would have seen the impropriety of bringing his friend so much into his sister's company, instead of lending himself to forward the non-sensical business as he has done. I blame Alfred for the whole thing. It is an excellent connexion, to be sure ; but——"

" Connexion, Aunt Annie?" indignantly interrupted Aunt Elizabeth, " I am really astonished to hear you talk so ! The son of a younger brother, with less than four hundred a-year of his own, and no prospects but his profession. What signifies connexion in a case like that ? His uncle, Lord Clifton, has a dozen sons of his own to exert his interest for, and this wrong-headed goose, Mrs. Livingstone tells me, was mad enough to refuse to be taken into his other uncle, Mr. Elliott's, great American firm, some years ago,—which would have been the making of his fortune,—because, forsooth, he wanted to go to Oxford ! I think that is enough to stamp what he is. Connexion, indeed ! The son of an industrious shopkeeper, who had realized a comfortable fortune, would be a more suitable connexion. What good will his noble blood do him, I should like to know, without money ?"

“ You needn’t be so short, Elizabeth,” replied Aunt Annie, with dignity. “ I wasn’t going to say a word to the contrary; though, at the same time, I would be very sorry, I can assure you, to see my nephew’s daughter marry without connexion. I haven’t lost my respect for good blood, my dear, quite as much as you seem to have done. But, oh dear, sirs! isn’t it grievous to remember that the foolish lassie might have married both good blood and good fortune, if it hadn’t been for this infatuated business? To think of the headstrong folly of young people! And now they want to crown all by running into an entanglement that they’ll never repent but once,—and that will be all their lives !”

“ I hope, Lilius,” again broke in Aunt Elizabeth, with much agitation, “ that you will be advised by my aunt and me, and see the folly and danger of yielding to these wrong-headed creatures? Of all things in the world, I have the greatest horror of long engagements! And there is something, too, very wrong, very reprehensible indeed, in the way this young man has behaved. Ah, Lilius, I warned you—I warned you what was going forward! You see now whether or not I was right. Yes, yes; he went very quietly to work.”

“ Ay!” interrupted Aunt Annie, “ so quietly and cunningly! Coming to visit Alfred, with his books and his nonsense; speaking such havers as I’ve heard them both do myself at Ferneylee, encouraging each other in all sorts of ridiculous notions !”

"I can tell you," pursued Aunt Elizabeth, "that both Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone were excessively disgusted with the nonsense he and Alfred spoke. As Mr. Livingstone justly observed——"

"Oh! indeed, Elizabeth," interrupted Mrs. Falconar, eager to exculpate herself from the charge of approving her son's sentiments, "you need not tell me so. I can assure you that Alfred's ideas on many subjects give me no small pain; and I have often listened with extreme displeasure to his conversations with Mr. Clifton. But what could I do? And as to neglecting your warning,—Heaven knows, I have no wish to complain; but when I saw that any interference would be taken as a cruel injury, and probably altogether set at nought, I was compelled, against my own will, to submit to the evil. Indeed, as my brother Sir Anthony says, I have always been too easy with my children."

"Indeed have ye," quoth Aunt Annie; "and so comes of it now."

"But, for goodness' sake, Lilius," energetically followed up Aunt Elizabeth—"for goodness' sake, do try to pluck up a little spirit now! Bless me, think what you are about to do! There is that wrong-headed young man going away——"

"The sooner he goes the better, my dear," interrupted Aunt Annie. "I wish he *were* fairly away."

"Hear me out, Aunt Annie, if you please. There he is going away, Lilius, and nobody

knows when he may be back again, or whether he ever *will* be back again."

"And nobody cares, Elizabeth," once more interposed Aunt Annie. "The longer he stays away the better, that the daft-like business may be forgotten."

"Bless me, Aunt Annie!" exclaimed Aunt Elizabeth, waxing wroth at these repeated interruptions, "it is very odd indeed that you wont let me speak!"

"Oh, speak away, my dear—speak away!" majestically replied Aunt Annie. "I wish you would speak to the purpose, though."

"How can any body speak to the purpose when they are always interrupted? It is all very well to say, the longer he stays away the better; but will it be the better—tell me that? if he is to maintain a correspondence with Eleanor? The foolish girl, with her absurd, improper notions about love, and constancy, and all that abominable nonsense, will consider it a bounden duty to stand by her engagement, if she form one; and what becomes of her then? Her best prospects in life sacrificed to a ridiculous, romantic, girlish whim! The thing may drag on for years, and never come to any good at all. No, no, Liliias, if you take my advice, you will permit no correspondence!"

"Indeed, Elizabeth," replied Mrs. Falconar, with a deep sigh, "you have said no more than I said to Alfred this morning; but I declare to you that my life is embittered by these disagreements

in opinion; they are exhausting to my feelings! I abhor engagements myself, and all that stuff about love——”

“ Love!—nonsense! Exceedingly indelicate and disgusting, in my opinion,” exclaimed Aunt Elizabeth, “for girls to talk about love. And every fancy they take in their heads, for any young gentleman who chooses to make fine speeches to them, is to be called love, forsooth? My sister, Mrs. Livingstone——”

“ Ay!” interrupted Aunt Annie, “my niece, Mrs. Livingstone, never would allow any nonsense of that kind to be spoken about. And see how discreetly her girls have always judged and conducted themselves! There was that young man, Graham of Garnwood—a cousin of Sir James Forbes Graham—when he asked Gertrude, two years ago, she liked him very well, and I dare say might have taken him; but when her father decidedly represented to her, that even with the fortune he could give her, they would not be able to live up to the style she had been accustomed to, she very properly said that, since that was the case, she must think no more of him. And so the thing was wisely broken off.”

“ And much better that it should,” said Aunt Elizabeth; “there are no men worth submitting to such a change for. But when a really good offer comes in a girl’s way, it is most distressing to see her refuse it, as Eleanor was pleased to do with that amiable, respectable young man, Mr. Charteris; on the faith, I suppose, of being young and rather pretty, and so depending on

getting plenty of others. I can tell her there are not so many good matches to be had, and if she choose to throw away the chance of his coming forward a second time, which Mrs. Livingstone thinks by no means improbable, for this visionary prospect, she may live to repent it. Take my word for it, if they don't correspond, the thing will die away of itself, but if they do, you fling the girl's whole future good fortune into the fire at once."

"I wish that may be to do," pronounced Aunt Annie, in an oracular tone. "Oh, dear! how much better and wiser-like it would have been to have taken Mr. Charteris at once! I doubt the time's gone by now."

"My sister has not given up hopes of it, I assure you; and at any rate, it wont help to mend the matter," said Aunt Elizabeth, "that she should keep up a foolish engagement, and an improper correspondence, with a man who may never be able to marry her, and for anything we can tell, never intends to do it! Be you advised by us, Lilius, and write to him at once, forbidding any further mention of such a thing."

"Thank you, Elizabeth," replied her amenable sister-in-law; "I shall abide by your advice, which only confirms my own judgment. It is a bad business, take it as we may; but we must hope the best from time and separation."

Great, as may be imagined, was the consternation, and greater the wrath of Alfred, when on his return home late in the afternoon, his mother informed him of the tenour of the letter which she

had dispatched to Clifton. This she did in a triumphant tone, which seemed to challenge any censure of her conduct, and concluded her narrative by requesting that she might be spared any further remonstrance on a subject with regard to which she had fully made up her mind. Vain were Alfred's respectful expostulations—vain every attempt he made to shake her purpose. We have seen that Mrs. Falconar was impervious, and incapable of reply to argument of any sort, but possessed of a defensive armour infinitely more unconquerable than the brightest argumentative powers. Her son was finally compelled in despair to abandon the fruitless contest.

One point, however, he did contrive to carry. Mrs. Falconar at first expressed a resolution of keeping Eleanor at Braid during the whole of the following day, in order to prevent any farewell interview with her lover. But against this refinement in cruelty, (a parting suggestion of Aunt Elizabeth's,) Alfred directed such a host of argument and protestation, that his mother found herself ultimately compelled to yield the point; and, privately resolved to rescue his sister from, at least, as much annoyance as his presence could avert, he announced to his mother his intention of sharing the coach which she meant should convey her to the cottage on the following morning, and of escorting Eleanor back in it. These arrangements concluded, Alfred departed with a heavy heart and languid step, to keep his engagement with his friend.

CHAPTER II.

“Wir müssen Abschied nehmen, Karl,—erschrick nicht.
O sey ein Mann.
. . . Du verlierst mich, Karl,
Auf viele Jahre——Thoren nennen es
Auf ewig.”

SCHILLER.

“*Juliet.* O, think’st thou we shall ever meet again ?
Romeo. I doubt it not ; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

It was late in the evening, and the two friends were sitting together in Clifton’s apartment—Alfred by an open window, and Guy upon a sofa not far from it, on the cushions of which his forehead rested as he listened to the affectionate and hopeful suggestions by which Alfred strove to mitigate the distress into which Mrs. Falconar’s letter had thrown him. Their discourse, as may be imagined, had scarcely turned on any other topic since they met.

Clifton at length rang the bell to order coffee. It was brought, and a pause in their conversation

ensued, broken by occasional allusions to trivial subjects.

“Clifton,” said Alfred, at length, “you have, I know, a large share of *Germanism*—I will not call it superstition—on many points; this is just a light for discussing such topics, and I want to inquire what faith you have in dreams? How modern philosophy would blush to hear any one ask such a question!”

“Then my reply,” said Clifton, with a faint smile, “would give her something more to blush for. I have a great deal of faith in dreams—that is, in *some* dreams. I should like to see the human being who has not some lurking belief of the sort, though, perhaps, thrust into the remotest corner of his mind, and laboriously stifled. My German friends differ from us, I suspect, more in the *treuherzigkeit* which prompts them to avow such feelings than in the feelings themselves. That is one of the many instances in which I think ‘the great heart of the world’ may be taken as a guide to just conclusions. Do you not think with me, Falconar?”

“Indeed, I do,” replied Alfred. “We cannot tell the various ways in which it may please the Almighty Author of our being to communicate with the creatures whom he has formed, but we know that one way is to him as easy as another.”

“Yes, and we know that not one of all our thoughts is hidden from God. Are we then to conclude him unable to influence them? In the days of old He often spoke by means of dreams, and we assert that he does so no longer, not from

any proof that we can adduce in support of the assertion, but because of the incredulous, mocking, materialized spirit that characterizes the present day, and leads men to close their eyes and ears to everything beyond the pale of actual sense."

"Certainly," said Alfred; "all that we can ever advance upon the subject will amount to no more than conjecture, but modern wisdom lays down laws for Deity, and decides, at a glance, how far Almighty power can go. We judge of God by ourselves, and pronounce that to be a miraculous exertion of his power which to him is as easy as any other exertion. Yet, even in the present day, incidents do sometimes occur which baffle all the explanations of our philosophy."

He paused. Clifton looked earnestly at him. "Has anything, Falconar," he at length inquired, "led you to this train of thought in particular? Have you anything to tell me?"

"I have, Clifton," replied Alfred. "I was not at one time sure whether or not I ought to do so, but we never had a secret from each other, and we must not begin to have any now when we are on the eve of a long, long parting."

"For Heaven's sake what do you mean, Falconar!" exclaimed Clifton, half-starting from his seat, whilst a thrill of indefinable alarm shot through his heart at the tone of voice in which Alfred spoke—"what do you mean?"

"If you will listen to me calmly, my dear fellow," replied Alfred, "I shall tell you. Nay, I am almost sorry I began, and yet I think it is better to—to prepare you."

Clifton re-seated himself, and once more hiding his face on the cushions of the sofa, said, in a low and broken voice, "Go on, then, Falconar—go on; let me hear it, whatever it is!"

"It is," said Alfred, "what I have striven for a time, against my own internal conviction, to persuade myself was a delusion. But I now feel so completely convinced of its truth, that I could not feel at rest without telling it to you. You have heard me speak of that beautiful Sunday evening, the last but one that we passed at Cargarth?"

"Yes," returned Clifton, without raising his head—"yes, I remember."

"That evening," continued Alfred, "I remained alone in the old library, whilst Ellen and Clara went out for a walk, in which I was too much worn out by fatigue to accompany them. I sat for a long while in the window, thinking, I need not say on what subjects, till at last, feeling quite overcome by weariness, I lay down upon the sofa, and fell fast asleep. I think, at first, that I remember having some confused dream of my father, and you, and Eleanor—I cannot tell what—but it is of no consequence. It is the latter part of the dream which is so vividly impressed upon my fancy, that at this moment it stands before my eye like a scene of real life, belonging but to the recollections of yesterday. I imagined myself to be awake in that same room, and lying on the sofa in the same position which I really occupied, with my face turned towards the window, whence a long stream of light from the setting sun fell, through an opening in the

woods, full upon me. While I thus lay, I fancied that the door of the room opened, and that Eleanor entered. She approached, and looking at me, as I thought, with a peculiarly mournful expression, she said that she had been sent to tell me that there was a person come to the house who wished to see me. I asked who he was? She replied, a stranger. Would I see him? I answered, certainly. She quitted the room, and I remained upon the sofa as she had left me, and made no attempt to rise. In a few seconds, as it appeared to me, the door again slowly opened, and there entered, alone, a venerable old man, who advanced towards me, and stood beside the couch in such a position as to receive the light from the window full upon his head and person. I looked at him, whilst his eyes continued fixed upon me, without the slightest mixture of fear or surprise, which, indeed, you know, one hardly ever feels in a dream, and I have his form and countenance as distinctly before me, I could tell every feature in his face as accurately as I could have done yours a few minutes ago. His dress was a loose dark garment, of some antique shape, which flowed down to his feet; his countenance was pale, wrinkled, and solemn, lighted up by two calm and melancholy eyes; his hair was white and long, and a white beard fell over his breast. I looked at him, as I thought, in silence, which he was the first to break. He said to me, in a slow and solemn voice, 'I have a message for you, Alfred Falconar.' 'Who,' I then inquired, 'are you? and whence do you come?'

He replied, ‘*I am a dead man!* I come from a land of perfect peace, where there is no more sin or sorrow. I have been sent to you. You have suffered much lately, have you not?’ I replied, that ‘I undoubtedly had.’ ‘Take comfort,’ he resumed, ‘you have but a short period now before you. I have it in commission to tell you that *your time is out on the 24th of October.*’”

Clifton started as if a dagger had struck him to the heart, with a vehemence of agitation which shook the whole sofa on which he was leaning; but, mastering his emotion, pressed his hands against his temples, and bent forward as before. “Well,” he said, in a deep shuddering voice—“well?”

“He turned,” continued Alfred, “with these words, as if to leave the room. I endeavoured to address him again, but could not speak. Then, starting up, as I thought, to arrest his progress, I suddenly awoke, and found myself alone in the room, on which the twilight had stolen whilst I slept, and thrown a shadow over every object. This, Clifton, is what I had to tell you; I have told it to no one else. What think you of it?”

Clifton made no reply; he neither moved nor raised his head from his hands, but remained in the same position in which he had listened to Alfred’s narrative. The latter, after looking at him for a minute in silence, spoke again in a low voice.

“Dear Clifton,” he said, “if it be so, it is but a little longer parting,—after all—a longer

farewell than we were about to say, at any rate. Try to look at it calmly."

"Did you say," suddenly asked Clifton, withdrawing his hands from his face, whose deadly paleness was visible, even in the dim twilight,— "did you say the—the—" his voice became nearly inarticulate—"the 24th of October?"

"I did," replied Alfred; "that was the day he distinctly named."

"My God!" exclaimed Clifton, starting from his seat, and coming towards the open window. He leant against the frame, nearly gasping for breath.

"Dearest Clifton," said Alfred, taking his friend's hand, "I entreat you, be calm. I almost regret having told you this."

"Falconar!" said Clifton, convulsively returning his grasp—"Falconar, it was a delusion! Oh, do not believe it! The time—the place—the state of your own mind;—many things may—*must*—have combined to create it. I implore you—I beseech of you—think well before you abandon yourself to a belief which may work its own fulfilment."

"Clifton," replied Alfred, "I know quite well that you do not believe what you are saying. You no more think it a delusion than I do. Nay," he continued, as Clifton seemed about to interrupt him,— "nay, I will tell you what leads me to consider it as no delusion. Not to mention the totally different nature of this dream from any other that I ever experienced, and the ex-

traordinary distinctness which has left it impressed upon my memory in a manner totally indescribable—I have other reasons for placing a reliance upon it, and for believing it, as I do, a warning sent me from heaven, with the merciful purpose of bidding me prepare for death."

"And what," asked Guy—"what are they?"

"Did you ever," asked Alfred, "hear any one express a singular opinion, which was once expressed to me by my tutor—a man who had seen much, and meditated more, of death—to the effect that no one, arrived at years of reason and judgment, ever left this world without having felt beforehand the sensation of being completely weary of it?"

"Nay, consider," exclaimed Guy, "the number of sudden deaths,—the deaths of those cut off in the midst of happiness and enjoyment. Many, doubtless many, are weary enough of the world; but, surely not all who leave it."

"I advanced the same objection," replied Alfred, "and I remember that it was met by the reply, that it was impossible for us to tell the previous sensations,—the strange, perhaps unacknowledged, internal feelings, which may precede the most sudden death, and equally impossible to imagine those of weariness, at least of unsatisfied longing,—which may intrude upon the brightest earthly hours of those who are doomed to die in the midst of happiness. It is wild conjecture all, and inscrutable mystery; yet, Clifton, judging from my own sensations, I should say that the idea was a just one. If ever living

being, in the prime of youth, felt that indefinable weariness which may be supposed to precede death, I do, and have done for a good while past."

"Oh, Falconar!" exclaimed Clifton, "why give way to such ideas, that may be otherwise accounted for?"

"No, Clifton," returned Alfred, "not the sensation I mean. I can hardly describe it to you. It is a feeling as if I were done with the world—done with its affairs; as if I stood apart from them, and they were no more to me. It comes over me in my own despite—an impression on the mind, not an exertion of the judgment. If I listen to a political discussion, or take up a newspaper, it is with thoughts of the folly of interesting myself in subjects which will so soon cease to concern me. If I turn to the metaphysical studies in which I used so greatly to delight,—those disquisitions, on which philosophers are so widely divided appear to me like the efforts of men groping in the dark after objects which a short while must render plain to me. The constant search after truth, which seems ever, when nearest, most to elude the grasp, inspires me with a sentiment of weariness unutterable. And these feelings I cannot help; nor can I dispel them at my own bidding."

"Falconar," again interrupted Clifton, "they may all be accounted for. You have suffered your mind to brood over the anticipation of—of—"

"Of death? No. I felt all this before I had reason given me to anticipate death. Even at

Cargarth, previous to that night, amid all the natural, the unavoidable agony of tearing myself thence, an internal voice seemed to whisper that to me it was of slight moment. I felt—in short, I cannot hope to make my meaning plain ; it is one of those sensations indescribable by words, because it resembles no other by which I could illustrate it. And there are bodily sensations, too, to repeat and enforce the warning. You know I never have been strong ; I have always been subject to inflammatory attacks. It is my belief that my life would not, under any circumstances, have been a long one ; and, as it is, the sands have been shaken. Without any formed complaint, I have feelings of weakness—languor. No one can imagine the strangely-mysterious intimations which seem to be borne in upon the soul destined to quit its earthly tabernacle. And why, Clifton, should I endeavour to deceive myself ? Why should you endeavour to hear me with incredulity ? Is it not better to—”

“ Why ? ” exclaimed Clifton—“ *why ?* You—my friend—my brother—the brother of Eleanor ! Do not bid me believe it—it would drive me mad ! Think—think of her, and ask me why.”

Alfred did not reply for a minute ; when he did, it was in a voice broken, and nearly inarticulate from the struggle to speak calmly. “ Do I not think of her, Clifton ?—and of you, the friend—the brother of my youth ? Do I not ? ” He paused again, then went on with more composure. “ But, Clifton, if I can leave that beloved sister to the God, who is her father and

mine ; if she will have your faithful love to console her ; and if, in another world, I shall be to both of you a friend and brother still, only absent—not lost—nor without the hope of reunion ; if all this be true—and it *is* true—why sorrow, Clifton, as those who have no hope ? I have been forced upon a premature acquaintance with the struggles and cares of this world, and, but for those I must leave behind, I am happy to be called to quit it, ere it have found time to harden my feelings, or wind its enjoyments about my heart. Let us believe it best that it should be thus.”

“ Not now—not now !” returned Clifton, in a low and suffocating voice. He turned away, and sinking into a chair, flung his arms upon the table beside it, and, hiding his face in them, strove, but vainly, to repress the convulsive sobs which would no longer be restrained.

There was an interval of profound silence, which was at length interrupted by Alfred.

“ Clifton,” said he, “ we shall not have another evening alone together ; don’t let us waste our last hours thus.”

Clifton raised his face, which was now free from outward traces of his late violent emotion, and drew his chair nearer to that of his friend. It was late—very late, ere they parted that night. Hours passed and found them still pouring forth to each other the confidences of their inmost hearts, retracing their boyish exploits, revisiting, in fancy, every hill, every glen, every solitary scene that they had ever sought together,

calling up from all the forms and the memories belonging to the days of long ago. A species of melancholy pleasure, mingled with awe, possessed their hearts, and lent calmness to their conversation. But what words can render an accurate account of the sensations with which friends about to part under such circumstances exchange their latest, warmest, most unreserved store of recollections and of confidence? Such feelings are better left to the imaginations and the hearts of those who know, by experience, what it is to have loved and lost.

Alfred, on the following day, fulfilled his intention of accompanying his mother to Braid, in order to escort Eleanor home. He found ample cause to congratulate himself on having done so, when he perceived the tone adopted towards her by Mrs. Falconar, in acquainting her with the decision of the previous day. Although his presence had not sufficient power to allay the storm, he felt assured that in his absence it would have raged with tenfold power of worrying and provoking spitefulness; for with Mrs. Falconar, angry feelings never assumed a form more dignified,—one more intolerably annoying they could not have taken. A burst of passion, which is speedily over, is an ebullition of temper altogether angelic in comparison with the never-ending, still-beginning reiteration, wherein lies the strength of a peevish or a spiteful nature.

Poor Eleanor, thus rudely awakened from her dream of happiness, could only shed tears; and whilst she candidly repeated, in answer to her

mother's objurgations, the unalterable preference of her heart for Clifton, yet assured her that she would submit, if that were insisted on, to the painful restrictions at present laid upon their intercourse. She might, with equal effect, have continued silent; for Mrs. Falconar was one of those people who never listen, when angry, to a single word advanced in the way of explanation, submission, or defence. Alfred had nothing for it but to cut short the scene as fast as possible; and leaving Clara divided between grief and indignation, but by no means disposed, like her sister, to seek relief in tears, he hurried Eleanor away; and during their drive home, succeeded, by means of every kind assurance and gentle soothing in his power, in restoring her to a certain degree of composure. Eleanor had, in fact, almost anticipated the prohibition of her correspondence with Clifton; it was, therefore, less on that account than because of the extreme harshness and unkindness of her mother, that the late scene had given her most acute pain. But the words of Alfred fell, as they ever did, like balm upon her heart, and enabled her to prepare herself, with more of calmness, for the approaching farewell.

Alfred had made Clifton promise to dine with them that day; and having judiciously managed to persuade Harry into going to bed at eight o'clock, in order to prepare himself for walking out to Braid by peep of day on the morrow, which happened to be one of the Rector's holidays, the party were left entirely to themselves during

the latter portion of the evening. Of the three, Alfred was by far the most cheerful. Eleanor, even in the midst of her own sorrow, was repeatedly struck by Clifton's air of deep depression, and by the look of mournful earnestness with which she, at intervals, caught his eyes fixed upon her countenance; but resolving it all into the grief which lay so heavily at her own heart, and dreaming of no deeper cause, she exerted herself, as far as possible, to soothe and raise his spirits. They sat together in the window which commanded that beautiful view of the Firth already alluded to, and there they remained till evening had faded into twilight, and twilight, again, had deepened into night, and the stars were out in the cloudless sky, and the ever-shifting beacon on Inchkeith alternately beaming and fading away from amid the far obscure that brooded over the sea. At length it became so dark, that there was no longer a pretext for delaying the entrance of candles, and soon after their unwelcome appearance, Alfred arose.

“I have some letters to write,” said he, “and I dare say you can both do without me. Clifton, you will find me in my study when you want to see me.”

The lovers remained sitting where he had left them. Sometimes they were silent,—for there are times when to be near the object beloved is all that the heart demands, and when words seem weak to express its feelings; at others, they broke the silence to reiterate promises and vows

already engraven on their inmost hearts, and to go through those tender ceremonies belonging to the beautiful superstition of love—exchanging locks of their hair and rings. Clifton, whilst he drew one from Eleanor's hand, placed another—a single diamond, surrounded by pearls—upon the finger appropriated to the wedding-ring, never to leave it more till replaced by that sacred symbol.

“Ellen,” said he, at last, “will you sing to me once more? Let me carry away one of your dear old melodies in my heart to-night.”

They had at this moment talked themselves into a more hopeful spirit, and Eleanor did not feel it so impossible to comply with the request as she would have done a little while before. She sat down to the instrument, whilst Guy placed himself in his old seat beside her; and without opening a music-book, her hand, almost unconsciously, fell into the notes of a song over which he had often hung with delight, that exquisitely touching ballad, “The Land o' the Leal.” But scarcely had her sweet liquid voice breathed out the words—

“I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths when it's thaw, John—
I'm wearin' awa', John,
To the land o' the Leal;”

when he laid his hand on hers.

“Not *that*, Ellen—oh, not *that!*” he exclaimed, in a voice of suppressed agony.

Eleanor looked up at him, her eyes filling with tears. Clifton clasped his arm around her, and

hid his face on her shoulder. He could not articulate another word. The song she had unwittingly chosen seemed, in his excited state of feeling, like an omen confirming all the dark anticipations whose shadow lay upon his soul.

“ Guy—dearest Guy,” Eleanor gently whispered—“ don’t ask me to sing ! We—we—neither of us can——”

“ And must, must these be the last notes ?” he falteringly uttered. “ Is it *thus* ?” He paused, unable to say more.

“ No, no, Guy,” she replied, endeavouring to check her tears ; “ we shall meet again—do not doubt it.”

“ God grant it, Ellen !” he fervently exclaimed. “ And oh, my beloved, remember, *whatever* may befall—remember, that to me you are dear as light and life ! Keep a hopeful heart, for my sake, Ellen.”

The moment of parting came at last. Of its thrilling agony, Eleanor retained no distinct remembrance. She only recollects the straining clasp with which she was folded, again, and yet again, to the heart of Clifton—the pressure of his last kisses on her cheek—the half-inarticulate sounds in which his farewell died away ; she saw him, through her blinding tears, as he again and again turned to leave her—then turned again, once more to clasp her in his arms—to kiss away her tears—to whisper broken words of love and tenderness. At last, it was all over : one long, long embrace—one “ God bless you, my beloved ! God bless you !”—then he rushed from the room,

and she saw him no more. She heard him enter Alfred's study—there was a long interval—the door opened again—closed—hasty steps traversed the lobby—the door of the house shut to. He was gone.

During the next hour or two, Guy Clifton sought to calm the fever of his heart, by wandering among the unfrequented paths near Corstorphine Hill. The dawn of the beautiful summer morning found him once more in front of the house which contained all dearest to him on earth. He leant with folded arms against the parapet-wall which fenced the road, and stood gazing upon its windows, as though they had possessed power to reveal to him what was passing within. All was still, calm, and silent. Not a creature but himself appeared to be awake :

“ The very houses seem’d asleep,
And all that mighty heart was lying still.”

He turned, and looked over the fair scene to the Firth, on which the light was breaking that heralds the rising sun. It was the long and lingering gaze of one who knows, that many a day must pass, and many a change occur, ere the same well-known objects meet his eyes again ; and that thought, in a world like this, cannot fail to be a painful one. Clifton looked as he would have looked his last, then moved away, and rapidly bent his steps towards the silent city. He had left one era in his life behind him : another, and a widely different, lay before him now.

CHAPTER III.

“ Had you ever a cousin, Tom ?
Did your cousin happen to sing ?
Sisters we’ve all by the dozen, Tom,
But a cousin’s a different thing.

And people think it no harm, Tom,
With a cousin to hear you talk ;
And no one feels any alarm, Tom,
At a quiet cousinly walk.

But, Tom, you’ll soon find what I happen to know,
That such walks often turn into straying ;
And the voices of cousins are sometimes so low,
Heav’n only knows what you’ll be saying !

I once had a cousin that sung, Tom !

And ‘twixt walking and singing, that cousin has been—
God forgive her !—the ruin of me !”

HAVING now, dear reader, reached a breathing-place in this narrative—a sort of pause in the action of the piece—let us, for a brief space, leave off following the divided fortunes of Guy and Eleanor, to turn our eyes upon some of the other personages who have figured in the course of this motley tale,—an end best gained, at present, by inspecting their correspondence.

First in the list stands a letter from Mrs. Livingstone, to Aunt Elizabeth, which we shall take leave to transcribe:—

MRS. LIVINGSTONE TO MISS ELIZABETH FALCONAR.

“ Ferneylee, June 22.

“ MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—I really have been in so constant a bustle for some time past, that I could find no leisure to answer your last letter, and, though now I have secured a moment of comparative tranquillity, there is no saying how long I may be permitted to enjoy it. We have a very full house at present. George and Lady Susan are with us, and her sister, Lady Patricia Malcolm, a very pretty creature ; and besides these, there are the Hope Lindseys, Sir George Kirkpatrick, and young Herries of Redswire. Last week, we had Sir Norman and Lady Anne Drummond, with little Lord Lintrose, Lord Rossiewood’s eldest son, whom they were bringing down for his holidays from Houghton-le-Spring. He is a very nice boy of fourteen ; Lady Rossiewood lost two children between him and that pretty Lady Helen, whom you may remember seeing at our house last winter. The Drummonds are now gone north to Rossiewood. Lady Anne is a very sweet creature ; she was a daughter of Lord Brackentower’s, and has not been long married to Sir Norman. The latter is a fine-looking young man ; but I cannot say that he is a great favourite of mine. I suspect he is

rather satirical, and so grave and reserved!—a remarkable contrast to his brother, Captain Sholto Drummond, of Robert's regiment, you know, whom you must recollect meeting often at our house. He is a lively, madcap sort of genius, and Bob brought him to the house oftener than I quite liked, for I thought he seemed prodigiously inclined to make the amiable Gertrude, and of course neither Mr. Livingstone nor I could have permitted such a thing. Indeed, our dear Gertrude, whose extremely proper way of thinking, on all subjects, daily affords us gratification, and enables us to repose an implicit confidence in her prudence, would never, I am convinced, have dreamt of a match so unequal in point of fortune; but still, I felt myself to be acting a wiser part, in discouraging his attentions as much as possible: reports of that nature are very prejudicial to a young lady, and, in many cases that I could name, have been the means of preventing gentlemen from coming forward, as they might otherwise have done, and with Gertrude's beauty, accomplishments, and fortune, one cannot be too careful. Captain Drummond has very little beyond his commission, and I have no doubt, would have found her twenty thousand pounds very convenient. He made use of his pretty cousin, Lady Helen, who was very much with us last winter, as a sort of blind, to conceal the real object of his admiration, both in our house, and wherever else he met them together, and, I dare say, thought he had effectually deceived me as to his motives; but, I flatter myself, that is not

quite so easily done as he probably supposed. It is a nice plan for the young gentleman, whenever he is in pursuit of any one else, to make a cat's-paw of his cousin; but I cannot say, for my part, that I consider such conduct as at all honourable to the young lady, or what I should choose to see adopted towards any daughter of mine. The young men of the present day are really very daring—I may say, unprincipled, in their proceedings.

"I had a few lines, the other day, from Bob. The —— Dragoons seem to dislike their new quarters very much; and Bob says they look back with infinite regret to the gaieties of Edinburgh. His absence makes a blank in our circle, but a trifling one compared with that left by our dear Amabel. Charles and she are at present in Switzerland, and as soon as the heat of the summer is over, mean to proceed to Italy. Charles writes me that Amy is in greater beauty than ever. He is devoted to her, but indeed I cannot conceive how it should be otherwise. Harriette Graham comes here next week, with Sir Anthony Wellwood, his lady, and daughter. Since Robert has gone into the same regiment with their eldest son, we have necessarily become much more intimate, for you know, notwithstanding his being poor Douglas' brother-in-law, my marriage involved so many new duties and new connexions, and such an immeasurably extended circle of acquaintance, that I saw but little, comparatively speaking, of many connexions of my own family. Miss Wellwood is a fine girl, though, for my taste, her style is somewhat

prononcée, but, indeed, as Miss Gentle says, my taste has, perhaps, been over-refined by my own daughters. Kind creature! she is so much attached to us all! I have her here at present, and she is very good in reading aloud, and attending to old Lady Hope Lindesay, when I am engaged with my other guests, and she is always so anxious to be of service to me in any way. Captain Cousins is with us, too. Worthy man! he cannot be happy at a distance from us when George is here. I am sure if he were his own son, he could hardly be more attached to George. And he does so worship Mr. Livingstone, who, indeed, I must say, has been a very staunch friend to him. It is not often that you see early friendships survive such differences of fortune and station as theirs has done, but Mr. Livingstone quite agrees with me in that feeling, which actuates me towards my old friends, whatever be their present situation. I am sure that affectionate creature, Dick Cousins, must miss Bob sadly. We mean to have him here, for a while, when he can get away from his office. I have little Kitty Ireland in the house just now. I feel that I cannot do her mother a greater kindness than by bringing her forward a little now and then; and she is so grateful for it, and so fond of Gertrude! It is quite a pleasure to see how devoted she is to us all.

“ Pray mention our sister Lilius and her family when you write. I must say I have not forgiven Eleanor’s ridiculous folly in refusing Mr. Charteris; but I should hope, as so often occurs, that

she may by this time have begun to perceive her mistake, and from all I can learn, I have very little doubt that he might easily be induced, by a little judicious encouragement, to come forward again. He appears to have been much attached to her, and by no means to have got over it. It is too provoking, to think of the silly girl having flung away the chance of so eligible an establishment. Her mother has a great deal to answer for, in the latitude she always allowed these young people, and the romantic notions which they were suffered to imbibe. I cannot but feel for her, even although I must say she could expect no better, when I reflect on the comfort and satisfaction that we have always enjoyed in our dear children.

“ I hope this hot weather has not affected my aunt? When will you and she pay us a visit? I suppose you would rather let it be when the house is quieter than at present? Indeed, just now, we should have no leisure to enjoy each other’s society. Such are the penalties of gay life. But what can one do? We must see our friends, or they would forget our existence. Pray let me hear from you soon, dear Elizabeth. You have no such calls upon your time as those which interrupt me. And now, having accomplished writing a longer letter than I dared hope, I shall bid you good-bye. With love to my aunt, believe me,

“ Your affectionate sister,

“ A. LIVINGSTONE.”

CAPTAIN DRUMMOND TO THE LADY ANNE DRUMMOND.

“Cork, June 19.

“DEAR LADY ANNE,—Relying on your well-known character for kindness and good-nature, I venture to cast myself upon your mercy for a very great favour. A letter from my wise and decorous brother (from whom, if you please, this present proceeding must remain a little bit of a secret between you and me) gives me to understand that you are at present at Rossiewood, where he means to leave you, and proceed on a yachting excursion to Orkney. He must be off ere this can reach you, and despair has given me courage to fling myself at your feet. Norman is a stoic, but you are a mild and gentle specimen of your angelic sex. Pray, my fair sister, accept this compliment as a bribe, and prove yourself an angel by delivering the enclosed letter to my pretty and dear little cousin, Lady Helen. Will you?—I am sure you will. You won't refuse a poor fellow who sues for your compassionate assistance. You don't know what an unhappy lot is mine. Poor, a younger brother, and in love, over head and ears in love!—a triad of miseries! I have no resource but to enlist you on my side; and if you fail me, I am indeed undone. I have loved little Helen ever since I was a boy; and I used to call her my wife long and many a day before I discovered that, when people wished to procure wives, it was a necessary preliminary that they should have something

to live upon. Hang all entailed estates, say I! that fellow Norman, your lord and master, has, I must say it, a cruel advantage over me, his amiable and deserving younger brother! And hang all mercenary papas and mammas! They let me flirt with Helen so long as she had no better worldly prospects than myself; “Cousin Sholto” was permitted to dangle after her, and swell her train of admirers, without a thought of the injury either of our hearts might sustain, whilst there was no possibility of our mustering sixpence between us, to set up housekeeping on. But no sooner did old Uncle John settle his estate on her, a few months ago, than a change took place directly, (and, *par parenthèse*, the cankered carle might just as well have left Burlin Dean to me, that would have set all right, and been equally in Helen’s favour, you know,) *then* I was hardly permitted to speak to her, never invited to the house, every possible means taken to keep us asunder; in short, never was a poor young man so infamously treated. Last winter, when our regiment was at Piershill, if I had not fallen upon the expedient of pretending a vast admiration of that beautiful statue, Gertrude Livingstone, who has never a heart in her composition, we should have had no intercourse at all. But that plan served my purpose admirably, for Helen and she were a good deal together, and constantly at the same parties; so all the gossips set to watching my proceedings with the fair Gertrude, and never remarked my snug tête-à-têtes, and quiet waltzes with my

little coz, who had a whole train of adorers at her heels. *They* admired *les beaux yeux de sa cassette*; and I—I who never cared a straw for money in my life, and would rather have Helen without a penny than the greatest heiress in Britain—I suppose would have been classed amongst them by her vigilant chapéron, and treated accordingly, but for this bright idea. But since our regiment came to this vile place, I can hear nothing of Helen, and I am beginning to get distracted with apprehensions. I hear reports of her marriage to this man and that man; to the rich young nabob, Oswald, and to that conceited puppy Lord Glenmarley, who, I understand, is expected at Rossiewood on the 12th of August; and though I have all the faith in Helen that ever man had in woman, I cannot help being quite miserable. Lord Rossiewood is so ambitious, and my honoured aunt so confoundedly clever, there is no saying what they mayn't do. I durst not write openly to Helen, for all the letters pass from the post-bag through his lordship's clutches, and he knows my hand as well as I do myself; so that I was at my wits' ends, till my good genius inspired me with the thought of making you my medium of communication. To you, therefore, dearest Lady Anne, I commit my cause, and according as you discharge your trust with fidelity, will be the everlasting gratitude of

“Your humble petitioner and
devoted brother,
“SHOLTO DRUMMOND.”

THE LADY ANNE DRUMMOND TO CAPT. DRUMMOND.

“ Rossiewood Castle, June —.

“ DEAR SHOLTO,—A marble heart could scarce have resisted your appeal. I have discharged my commission, and that most faithfully; and I now enclose its fruits in a letter from Helen. But, my good brother, I have only one advice to give you,—and that is, in Scottish phrase, to ‘*ca’ canny.*’ Don’t be rash. Sir John is still alive; and would not be slow to alter his will, if he thought it possible that *you* should ever benefit by it. And, besides, were Helen in possession of Burlindean to-morrow, she wont be of age for a year and a half; and I need not tell you that, although I know you don’t care for money, yet it is impossible to marry without it; therefore be careful of your proceedings, lest you attract observant eyes to them, for, as you yourself remark, Lady Rossiewood (though I like her exceedingly) *is* “confoundedly clever,” and certainly has higher views for her daughter. Don’t be offended, but take my counsel as it is meant—in good part, and never mind Lord Glenmarley, or Lord Anybody. The world will be talking, and Helen is a lively little flirt, as you know; but you may depend upon her heart.

“ I don’t see why you should be so suspicious of Norman, but since you wish it, I shan’t confide our little plot to him at this time, though I own it rather goes against my conscience to have secrets from my husband. And now good-bye,

dear Sholto; and believe that your affairs have the best wishes of,

“Your affectionate sister,

“ANNE E. F. L. DRUMMOND.”

THE LADY HELEN GRANT TO CAPTAIN DRUMMOND.

“Rossiewood Castle, Monday.

“MY DEAREST SHOLTO,—How *could* you be so absurd as to write to me? I am very angry with you! Mamma came into my room, when I was reading your letter, so suddenly that I had barely time to conceal it, and I really thought I should have fainted, though I never performed an exploit of the sort in my life. That would have been a nice exposé, would it not?

“Master Sholto, you are a very, very, very naughty boy! You are jealous—I see you are; the thing wont conceal. And jealous of *me*! Treacherous—forgetful, as you are! Was *I* ever jealous when you stole Gertrude Livingstone’s fan, and abstracted her bouquet? Did I look daggers when you waltzed with Lucy Ramsay, or when you copied Spanish serenades for Emily Baird’s guitar? Did I refuse to speak to you, as many people would have done in my place, after you had been hanging for a whole evening over Lady Jane Hamilton’s harp, or sitting for an hour in a corner with Alicia Lindesay? Have you already forgotten our compact,—that the best way of keeping our engagement secret would be by

behaving exactly as usual to everybody else? Do you want to make me repent of having entered into a secret engagement, by shewing me that my compliance has lessened me in your esteem, at least in your confidence? Often have I lamented, as it is, that I have deceived, *am* deceiving, my parents. I have little need that you should give me further cause to do so. I require all the arguments that can be arrayed on the side of my own conduct to justify it to myself; I require to remind myself, that much as I once hated the idea of being distinguished above the rest of my family by my uncle's preference,—yet that now, for your sake, I ought to rejoice in it, and beware of forfeiting his favour by any rash disclosure; and that if old Uncle John were once to dream of my being engaged to a silly, extravagant, mad-cap officer in his Majesty's —— Light Dragoons,—the son, moreover, of a nephew whom he never could abide,—there would very soon be an end to my heiresship. Nay, I know, and you know, that if papa and mamma dreamt of our attachment, we never should be able to meet again, for, to be plain with you, friend Sholto, you are no great favourite with either. They have higher expectations for me, and, the more's the pity, I am not my own mistress. And yet, in the face of all this, and in the face of the suspicions which you must be well aware that they *once* entertained,—though you managed to lull them a good deal to sleep last winter,—you have the audacity to be jealous of me, and the folly to do a thing, which,

if discovered, would have been the ruin of us both! Why, you foolish man, don't you know that I have been a rattle—a flirt, if you will—all my life? And were I to change my character and deportment now, what conclusion *could* be drawn but the just one—of a heart preoccupied? I am forced, in self-defence, to go on flirting.

“ Then, as to the objects of your suspicions. Marmaduke Oswald, poor young man, has fled to the Continent,—for no other purpose, I verily believe, than to get out of my way; his papa, I suspect, being very anxious to unite, not him with me, but Burlindean with Cargarth. So much for Marmaduke! As to Lord Glenmarley, he *is* coming here for the Moors. So are Sir Arthur Oliphant, Mr. Wedderburn Ramsay, elderly Sir George Kirkpatrick, young Sir Peter Menzies, old Lord Rubisglen, young Lord John Warden, and sundry others, with a due proportion of ladies to match. I only wish you could be of the party. And of course there will be dancing—and private theatricals—and all the ordinary doings of a gay autumn; so remember that I have given you fair warning. Whilst I am at Rossiewood I must do as the Rossiewoodians do. And don't you be such a goose as to be jealous, or to believe any of the silly nonsense that silly people always delight in saying. Must I repeat once more, that, let me *seem* what I may, I *am* only yours? Must I, in my own despite, be serious,—and assure my dearest, dearest cousin, that I never was, nor ever can be, for an instant, unmindful of him. That, giddy

as people may choose to think me, his image is the only one that has ever filled my heart? I think I need hardly add more. Bless you, dearest Sholto! And many happy days may we see yet, in spite of Marmaduke Oswald, Lord Glenmarley, and the green-eyed monster!

“Ever your most affectionate cousin,
“HELEN COCHRANE GRANT.”

“P.S.—I should have written a much, much longer letter, dearest Sholto—I had many things to say, and it may be so long ere we meet again!—but I have very little uninterrupted time, and am fearful of being caught in the fact. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I think you may sometimes send me a message through Anne. You ought to let Norman know something about it. He is very kind, though he is so grave and solemn; and in that case we could hear of each other now and then, without exciting his surprise or any one’s suspicion. I am sure he would keep our secret. Why shouldn’t he? This is merely my own idea; I have not mentioned it to Anne, but you had better think of it. Once more farewell, dearest Sholto!”

CHAPTER IV.

“ This she ?—No—this is Diomedes’ Cressid;
 If beauty bear a soul, this is not she :
 If souls guide vows—if vows be sanctimony—
 If sanctimony be the gods’ delight—
 If there be rule in unity itself—
 This is not she.”

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

“ Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
 The dance gaed through the lichted ha’,
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
 Though this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast o’ a’ the town,
 I sigh’d, and said, amang them a’,
 ‘ Ye are na’ Mary Morrison.’ ”

ROBERT BURNS.

“ So, Guy, you have actually condescended to desert Themis for Terpsichore to-night? How can you reconcile your conscience to such levity?”

“ So, ’Gus, you have actually contrived to remember the names of one heathen goddess and a muse? How can *you* reconcile your conscience to smelling of the lamp, in a ball-room, to such an incredible degree?”

“ It was the sight of you that inspired me, Guy ; you recall so many classical reminiscences to my mind.”

Thus spoke Augustus Clifton, as the two cousins met, in a crowded lobby, at a brilliant ball, given by Lady Clifton de Pevenley, about a fortnight after Guy’s arrival in London.—“ And now, continued ’*Gus*, as he examined his cousin from head to foot, with a very scrutinizing glance—“ now, let me see ; I must have an accurate idea wherein your costume differs from mine to-night, Guy, that I may be able to warn my partners how to distinguish us, otherwise we shall have all sorts of mistakes happening. I haven’t forgotten our Oxford adventures in that way.”

“ Nor I,” returned Guy, somewhat significantly. “ It was not always particularly convenient to be your *doppelgänger* at Oxford, ’*Gus*, nor particularly advantageous to one’s reputation for regularity. As it is, notwithstanding the difference in our outward men to-night, and the absence of gown and trencher, half-a-dozen people have spoken to me, on the staircase and in the ball-room, for you.”

“ Ah, very likely ! I wish some of my duns would make the mistake, Guy ; I shouldn’t quarrel with it, then.”

“ Thank you ; I dare say not. Is Dudley here to-night ?”

“ Can’t say ; I haven’t been very long come myself. I dined with Brudenell, and sat late. But I shouldn’t imagine Dudley had left the

house yet. You know, he is tied to the oar in Downing Street now, and gets more of a man of business daily."

"I wonder whether your attaché-ship, 'Gus, will transform *you* into a man of business?"

"That is as it may be," replied 'Gus, with a smile. "As to *you*, Guy, I expect to find you on the Woolsack, by the time I come home from Naples; that is, provided you have not grown into part and parcel of the Woolsack itself, or sent your brains to collect stuffing for it. Why, if you go on as you have begun, you will study all your senses out—your wits will evaporate in a cloud of pounce."

"No danger," said Guy; "my senses are not nearly in so much peril as yours, 'Gus."

"Ah! that is an old subject of dispute. But now that we have the advantage of an uninterrupted tête-à-tête in this window, I want to get on confidential terms, Guy, and to be enlightened as to many things that have been puzzling me. And, in the first place, pray tell me where you have left your heart? I know that you adhere to old-fashioned customs, and, therefore, am quite sure that you have bestowed it upon some one—plainly perceiving that you have not brought it back with you."

"Nay," replied Guy, "I knew that I should have no use for a heart in the Temple, so I laid it in St. Anthony's Well, thinking that the hallowed spring would preserve it safely till I returned to fetch it."

"Very poetical! but it won't pass. I am not quite so simple as not to see that."

“ What?” inquired his cousin, smiling.

“ Why, that there must be some very good reason for all this prodigious appetite for the law, after your lingering in Scotland, too, a month longer than you need have done. Ah, Guy! there would need some potent spell to invest your new studies with any attraction—

‘ For *thee* I have open’d my Blackstone,
 For *thee* I have shut up myself;
 Exchanged my long curls for a Caxon,
 And laid my short whist on the shelf.
 For *thee* I have sold my old sherry,
 For *thee* I have burnt my new play;
 And I grow philosophical—very—
 Except—’”

“ Except in a ball, I hope,” said a silvery voice; and a lovely girl of eighteen, whose strong resemblance to both the young men at once disclosed her near relationship, interrupted Augustus’ declamation, by disengaging her arm from that of a partner, in whose company she was passing the window, and pausing beside them. “ Which of you is ‘Gus?’ she inquired, with a smiling glance at each in turn.

“ That gentleman, I believe, answers to the name, Nora,” replied ‘Gus, indicating his cousin.

“ I think not, now I look more narrowly,” said she.

“ To prove the contrary beyond dispute, will you dance with me, Nora?” asked Guy.

“ That settles the matter,” said ‘Gus. “ There is no mistaking *l’Amphitryon où l’on danse*. A nice evasion of my questions, Guy; but don’t suppose that I shall let you off. I’ve had letters

from Scotland lately, and I mean to refer to you for some information hinted at in them."

"So, Nora, we may now hope to make acquaintance with each other," said Guy, as his fair partner and he paused in the waltz, and withdrew a little from the circle.

"Acquaintance, Guy?" asked Leonora Clifton. "I thought our acquaintance had been of some standing."

"I know you by *sight* very well," replied he, smiling; "but now that you have escaped from the trammels of your odious governesses, we may, perhaps, in time, attain to some further knowledge of each other, which I cannot say that I have hitherto found practicable."

"I see you are not much changed, Guy," said Leonora, returning his smile; "you were always an odd mortal. But you don't afford me much chance of making your acquaintance; you seem to shut yourself up so."

"I have begun to work very hard," returned he; "I shouldn't, I believe, have been so idle as to come here to-night, but that my uncle seemed to wish it."

"How *can* you endure such a life?" exclaimed the young lady.

"Nay," he replied, "I might return the question—How can *you* endure the life you lead? I am sure, Louisa and you have as severe fatigue in the pursuit of gaiety, as it is possible for any student to have in that of learning."

"But not quite the same sort of fatigue," said Leonora.

"I suspect, Nora, it is a fatigue inducing fully more of exhaustion and satiety, and leaving much less time for repose of mind."

"Why, indeed," she replied, "in the constant whirl at this season, one has hardly time to think. By the way, Guy, have you seen Frederica to-night?"

"No," returned Guy; "I did not know she was here."

"I don't know, really, whether she has arrived yet; she meant to come hither directly after the opera. There is a late debate expected to-night in the Upper House; and I don't think Lord Haslingden will look in upon us. Indeed, he is not very fond of balls, at any time."

"And is Frederica very gay?"

"Oh, so *very* gay! She has such a splendid establishment!—such beautiful jewels! Everything about her is in exquisite taste. Lord Haslingden is celebrated for that, you know. Not that I should *quite* like so old a husband, but Frederica does not seem to mind that. She is very happy, one of what the newspapers call 'leading stars of the season.'"

"That circumstance," returned Guy, "I presume is sufficient to account for her happiness."

"What a cynic you are, Guy! Do you mean to say that there is no pleasure in being admired and recherchée, and having half the world at one's feet?"

"Why, really," answered he, "if I were Lord Haslingden, I could dispense with seeing half the world at the feet of my wife. Don't you marry

any one, Nora, who will leave you exposed to such an ordeal. Are you inclined to waltz again?"

The waltz over, and the hand of the lovely débutante solicited by another partner, Clifton turned away from the dancers. The weight upon his spirits was such as completely to disipline him from partaking in their amusement, and he felt it, as is always the case, tenfold increased by the gaiety around him, and by the effort necessary to conceal it. Whilst leaning against a pillar not far from the door of entrance, he became aware, from the eagerness with which the eyes of those around him were suddenly attracted towards it, that some one whose arrival created a considerable sensation had just appeared.

"Yes, it is she!" "Beautiful!—splendid creature!" "Incomparably the handsomest, and they are all beautiful!" "Alone? Oh, dear no! He is constantly seen with her." "Her *husband*! Why, what could possess you to imagine such a thing? The *Cavaliere* is—" here a name followed which Clifton could not distinguish. "Ah, rather conspicuous I should say!" "I wonder Lady Clifton does not remonstrate!" "It is *my* amazement that Haslingden permits it!" "Pooh! there is nothing in it at all, I assure you!" "I did not say there was, but—"

Such were only a few of the sentences which reached Guy Clifton's ears, as he stood unperceived behind a group of young men. With what sensations he heard his cousin Frederica thus mentioned—for that she was the subject of con-

versation admitted of no doubt—it would not be easy to say. It was impossible for him, in the position he occupied, to catch a glimpse of her, or of the gentleman, whoever he might be, whose name was coupled with hers, but the knowledge that one whom he had regarded with such affection had already laid herself open to animadversions like these, supplied a terrible commentary on what he had a few minutes before been saying to Leonora, and filled his mind with an additional weight of mournful reflections. So soon as he found it possible to extricate himself from the crowd, he avoided the chance of hearing more on so painful a subject by quitting the spot; and glad to escape the heated atmosphere of a scene so uncongenial to his present state of feeling, turned into a beautiful conservatory on which one of the rooms opened, and, after wandering for a little while in its perfumed alleys, threw himself into a seat near a fountain, which fell in sparkling showers from a lotus plant cut in alabaster, and there, soothed by its fairy murmur, he remained for some time lost in reverie.

The seat which Guy had chosen was near, almost close to, another, formed at an angle where two alleys met, but separated from it by an immense orange tree in full bearing, and after awhile he heard footsteps coming towards it, and as they approached, recognised the voice of her who formed the theme of some of his thoughts at that moment—his cousin, Lady Haslingden.

“I shall rest here,” she said, in a languid tone. “I am very tired. You need not tell any

one where I am. And this is a retired spot, where they will not think of looking for me."

"You do not mean to remain here alone?" inquired another voice, in a very insinuating whisper. Guy Clifton started—all the blood in his veins seemed to rush into his head. It was the voice of Lord Aylesmore!

His first impulse was to rise from his seat. Whatever might be the tenour of their conversation, he felt that he had no right to listen to it, but it was impossible for him to leave the spot in either direction without being seen by them, and dreading any eclât for his cousin's sake, yet at that moment doubtful how far he could command himself, he paused to deliberate. They had continued talking, meanwhile, in very low tones.

"Do not bid me leave you," were the first words he distinguished. "You are weary—out of spirits. I beseech you, let me remain with you."

"I cannot. I entreat you, leave me here a little while alone," was Frederica's reply.

"*Entreat!* Ah, Lady Haslingden, that is an idle form of words! Entreat—from you to me! I must not disobey. But tell me, has my presumption displeased you?"

"No!" was the answer, uttered in a very low voice, and after a moment's hesitation.

There was no audible rejoinder, but Guy Clifton was convinced, from Frederica's half-suppressed exclamation, that her hand was taken and kissed. Just as he felt it impossible any longer to control his feelings at this scene, or to

remain an unsuspected auditor of it, Lord Aylesmore's steps were heard retreating down the alley. A deep sigh followed from his cousin, and then the silence remained unbroken, save by the liquid splash of the fountain, and the distant sounds of music and revelry from the ball-room.

Guy Clifton arose from his seat, and stepping forward, stood nearly opposite to Frederica, who, so deeply was she absorbed in thought, remained for about a minute unconscious of his presence. A lovelier form than hers at that moment could scarce have been imagined; as she leant back, one beautifully-rounded arm, glittering with jewels, supporting her head, her white forehead gleaming like a star beneath its gorgeous tiara of diamonds; her large dark-blue eyes and softly-chiselled features, bearing the same close resemblance to those of her cousin which distinguished all the Clifton family, cast down with an air of pensive thought which enhanced their sculpture-like beauty. He gazed upon her, and thought of the magnificent lot for which she had trampled under foot a warm and loving heart. She had gained her object. Flattery poured its incense around her; admiration, dangerous to the feelings as destructive of the holy purity of a wedded woman, pursued her footsteps, and ministered to her vanity; rank and wealth were hers; but—verily, she had had her reward!—that face bore no traces of happiness or of internal peace.

Suddenly she raised her eyes. “Augustus!” she exclaimed, as she beheld who stood before her; and her cheek, which an instant before had

been very pale, became suffused all over with a deep blush.

“No, Frederica, not Augustus,” replied Guy, coming more closely up to her.

“Guy!—is it possible? How long since we have met?” She held out her hand as she spoke, which she did with remarkable self-possession.

“It is,” replied Clifton, fixing his eyes upon her, “a long time.”

“I dare say you are surprised to find me alone here,” pursued the Marchioness, raising her taper fingers to push back a wandering ringlet from her forehead, “but I was so exhausted by the heat and crowd that I came to rest a little while in this quiet spot.”

“I am not surprised,” said Clifton, in a low but steady voice; “I did not *find* you here. I was here before you, Frederica; I was sitting close by you just now behind the orange tree.”

She started palpably at these words, despite her utmost self-control. Her eyes, for a moment, were fixed on the countenance of her cousin, but as suddenly fell abashed before his clear and earnest gaze, and the blood rushed in torrents over face, and neck, and brow, then faded, and left her as pale as marble.

“Frederica!” said Clifton, sitting down beside her, and taking her hand. It was withdrawn.

“Leave me, sir!” she haughtily replied. “By what right do you presume to constitute yourself a spy upon my actions, or to misconstrue what was not intended for your ears?”

“You wrong me, Frederica,” returned he, in

a tone of unaltered calmness, though a deep flush crossed his countenance at her words. " My overhearing your conversation was altogether involuntary, and as to misconstruction of it, I have uttered none. But I *do* claim a right, Frederica, to remonstrate with you on what I would give worlds to forget that I have heard to-night."

" Remonstrate!" she exclaimed — " remonstrate ! and on what grounds? You overhear the end—you *can* have heard no more—of a conversation whose beginning was totally different from—from what you suppose, and on that plea you talk of remonstrance—and to me! What have you to do with my private conversation?—how does it concern you?"

" In no way," replied Clifton. " I have neither right nor, believe me, desire, to intermeddle with any private matters of yours, Frederica. In talking of what I had heard to-night, I did not allude to your late conversation, into whose particulars I have no business to inquire, though its tone, I cannot but add, too painfully confirmed the truth of what had previously reached my ears in the ball-room, and it was of *that* I spoke." He paused in considerable agitation.

" Of *what?*" inquired Lady Haslingden, in a cold and haughty tone. " You must speak more plainly, Guy, if you wish me to comprehend you; and, even then, I must still inquire by what right you speak to me at all on such subjects."

" I shall answer both questions," said he, in a tone of mournful earnestness. " From twenty

mouths to-night, Frederica, I have heard your name coupled with that of some one—and that one *not* your husband—who is said to be in constant attendance upon you, concerning whose attentions, astonishment is expressed that your mother or your husband does not remonstrate, and whom I now conclude, from what I have lately heard, to be Lord Aylesmore—one of the last men, certainly, to be selected as the friend and companion of a young married woman. As to my *right*, Frederica, to speak to you on this subject, I claim it in various characters;—as a kinsman, bearing the name which suffers dis-honour when one to whom it belongs is thus talked of; as a nephew under deep obligations for kindness shewn him by your father; as your own former friend and confidant, whom, I think, you never have found deceive you; and as the friend of one who *did* love you too well, too faithfully, ever to endure, even now, to know that your name could be coupled with the sneers and evil surmises of profligate men."

He paused. Frederica's head was turned from him, but he could perceive the heaving of her bosom.

" You do not know, Frederica," resumed Clifton, " what it costs me to address you thus; but I *will* bring the truth home to you, if I can. You are not aware of the precipice on which you are treading. It behoves you to exercise tenfold circumspection in your conduct, rather than to lay yourself open even to groundless suspicions. You have—alas, that I should say so! for how different

might have been your fate!—you have, by your own choice, placed yourself in the most dangerous of all possible positions—that of a woman, young, beautiful, independent of parental control, and to whom the place of that control is not supplied by her own affection for her husband, or by his watchfulness over her—a position, beyond all others, most taken advantage of by the designing amongst our sex. I know not, nor do I wish to know, what may have passed between you and the person in question, but I am sure—satisfied—that you do not know him for what he really is—a man who loves no human being but himself, and who, at this moment, is seeking to make you conspicuous in the world's eyes solely for the gratification of his own vanity! Whatever he may have led you to suppose, he does not love you,—no man who did could have talked of a woman in the tone in which I have heard him mention you."

He had touched the right chord at last. Frederica turned her head, her cheeks crimsoned, her eyes flashing through the tears of wounded pride—"It is not," she exclaimed—"it cannot be true! You are deceiving me, Guy!"

"Frederica, did you ever know me assert an untruth?"

Her eye sank beneath the light of perfect sincerity in his, but she made no reply.

"You never did," he resumed, "nor ever will. What I have just told you is *true*, and has more than once occurred. I need say no more. I have no wish to dwell on such a subject; and but that I

felt it my duty, I had rather have cut off my right hand than inflicted on you the pain I have done. But if I have been the means of warning you against the devices of a heartless egotist, I shall be more—ten thousand times more—than repaid for the suffering it has cost me. And now," he added, rising, " tell me that we part friends, Frederica."

He held out his hand ; she hesitated for a moment, then gave him hers ; and as he clasped it, the tears came gushing into her eyes, but by an effort, she restrained them till Guy had left her alone, and then they burst forth in torrents, such as no feeling but insulted vanity can draw from the eyes of a woman like her. Other and better thoughts there doubtless were to mingle with it, but the deepest source of her grief lay there. Yet Clifton had gained his end,—he had saved his cousin from the snares in which she was beginning to be involved. Whatever permanent effect the rest of his remonstrance might have had, its concluding words had effectually broken the spell thrown over her, and thenceforth there was little danger for her in Lord Aylesmore's homage.

As for her adviser, after a scene so painful, it may be imagined that the ball retained few attractions for him. Meeting Louisa Clifton, the second daughter of the family, he informed her that she would find Lady Haslingden in the conservatory, thus securing her against the chance of a second tête-à-tête with Lord Aylesmore; then he hastened to effect an escape with what

speed the crowd would permit. Forced by its pressure, in one room, into the recess of a large open window, he remained there for a few minutes gazing up at the deep, blue, tranquil sky, which began to be streaked by the tints of early dawn. That sight carried the heart of the lover far away from the artificial and dazzling scene around him, and transported him, in thought, to the side of a lonely hill, overswept by the sweet breath of the summer heaven, with a twilight sky above, a flowery sward beneath, and a true and loving heart beside him. "My Eleanor," he exclaimed, "well may he turn from hearts so hollow and so vain who has the thought of thy dear faith and pure affection to shelter in his inmost soul, and guide him in the path by which he may hope to meet thee again!"

Clifton's application to his legal studies was intense and nearly unremitting—pursued, too, with all his characteristic ardour—and he resolved that even the summer recess of the courts of justice should not hinder his continuing to read law, and otherwise prosecute labours which had so powerful a motive to impel them. It happened thus that he did not see a great deal of any of his relatives during the remainder of the season. The one to whom his few spare hours were most frequently devoted, was the cousin, once before-mentioned as Mary Elliott, who had been secretly destined by her father for the wife of Guy, but who, a few months previously, had been permitted by him to follow her own inclinations, and bestow her hand and fortune on Henry Lavington, the

junior partner in the firm. Her he found surrounded by all the luxuries and comforts which opulence could bestow, and happy in the affection of a fondly-attached husband. It seemed in her case, that no care—at least none of the many thousand cares attendant upon want of money—could ever reach her; and she looked like one who had never known any, save by name.

A warm regard had always subsisted between Guy and his cousin Mary, who, in consequence of the early loss of her mother, had acted as mistress of her father's house ever since he had known her; and, as such, had been more brought forward than is usual with young girls. The tone of her character was one much calculated to inspire regard, being gentle, tender, and feminine to a degree, and totally free from the prejudices belonging to her father, as a naturalized Londoner, by which term we beg to be understood as indicating a being who looks upon wealth as the one chief good—attention to *business* as the one chief virtue, and “town” as the one only centre of happiness, the focus of all that is great and glorious;—who, in a measure, regards poverty as a fault, and who thinks that the end of man is to sit exalted upon a three-legged stool, immersed in the delightful task of calculation, “from morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve,”—*dewy*, alas! when did eve ever fall *dewy* over a London counting-house? Mary Lavington shared in none of these ideas, and her tastes and pleasures partook of the simplicity that marked the whole tenour of her disposition. She disliked fashion-

able watering-places, and loved the country. Moreover, although she had never lived anywhere but in London, or its immediate vicinity, she did not consider everything as improper that was not done in “town;” and she did not believe that all Scotchmen wore kilts at home, or that green peas would not grow north of the Tweed. From all these facts, it may be conjectured, that she was much more likely to appreciate the character and turn of mind of her cousin Guy, than her father had been, and that, far from participating in the contempt of the latter for his refusal to be enrolled in the great firm of Elliott and Lavington, she thought, in her secret soul, that it would have been a deplorable perversion of the intentions of nature, to have doomed such a being to the tasks in which her father’s youth had worn away.

The interest which Guy already felt in his cousin was increased, on this renewal of their intercourse, by a resemblance, which, now that he saw her again, he imagined that he observed in her person to that of Eleanor Falconar. It was one of those inscrutable likenesses which do not arise from feature, nor even from complexion, but which are sometimes more striking than those dependent upon either. Something there was in the elegant turn of the neck and head; something in the expression of the soft, and rather pensive, eyes, with their long black lashes—in the general air,—most of all, perhaps, in the tone of her voice, which was exceedingly soft and low, that forcibly brought the idea of Eleanor before

the mind of her lover, and invested their intercourse with a charm, augmented by Mary's affectionate gentleness, and the honest and open-hearted cordiality of her husband.

Thus engaged, and in the midst of these relations, we shall take leave of Clifton for the present, and turn our eyes, dear reader, once again upon our "own romantic town," there to note what shall meet their ken.

CHAPTER V.

“Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.”

DANTE.

THERE are many different species of heartache in this world, and many sharper and deadlier pangs than that of absence ; but still, separation from those we love is a hard thing to bear. In that respect, as in many others, men have the advantage over women. Wherever the lover goes, on quitting her presence to whom his heart is bound, he goes to action and to active life,—to life that demands the exertion of his mental, perhaps even of his bodily energies, that brings him into close collision with his fellows, and leaves him but little time for the weary pining of the heart, which is the worst pain of absence. And Hope—to him with whose own efforts it at least partly rests to change hope into certainty—wears an aspect brighter far, and speaks in a tone of far more joyous promise, than she does to that heart which has nothing to do but to wait—“to suffer and be

still." The duties of a woman are rarely such as to hinder her thoughts from dwelling on the past, and "C'est dans le cœur des femmes qu' habitent les longs souvenirs."

What can be a more dreary feeling than that of awakening on the first morning after the departure of one whose presence is to us as the light of life ! When Eleanor opened her eyes on the day succeeding the last evening which she and Clifton had spent together, it was with that desolate sinking of the heart, of which nothing but actual experience can convey an idea. That day, and several succeeding days, dragged slowly and sadly on, and brought little diminution to her sorrow. There is an exquisitely true description, in a tale of Maturin's,* of a girl deserted by her lover, who is represented as sitting, day after day, in her usual place; and ever, as the hour draws nigh that was wont to bring him to the house, listening in an agony of what she too well knows to be vain and empty anticipation, for every ring at the bell, and every footstep that approaches the door; and, whenever either sound is heard, feeling—"a little more faintly every day"—the heart-thrill that used to awake within her at the arrival of the false De Courcy. And though Eleanor's feelings were very different from the broken-hearted desolation of poor Eva's, they were sufficiently sad and lonely, as she sat, day after day, and started, and trembled all over at the same sounds, and felt her heart glow when she heard them, with a hope which she knew to

* Women; or, Pour et Contre.

be folly, and sink again as suddenly, and with a dejection as unreasonable, on its frustration. Thus, too, she sat alone in the evenings, the beautiful summer evenings, and watched, from Clifton's favourite window, the light dying away over the lower part of the prospect, and the kindling of the Inchkeith beacon, and thought over all his words, and looks, and actions, and of her mother's harsh prohibition of their correspondence, and of the long, long dreary time which must elapse ere they could meet again, till, in her own despite, the tears would spring into her eyes, and she would weep long and bitterly. She strove against this indulgence of sorrow, but it would not do. Nature will have her way, let us strive as hard as we will.

The only thing which varied the monotony of these melancholy days was her giving some sittings to a well-known miniature painter, which her brother, glad to seize the opportunity of his mother's absence, insisted on her commencing the very morning after Clifton's departure, intending the portrait as a gift from himself to his friend. But the first effectual diversion to Eleanor's mournful thoughts, appeared within a week after Guy's quitting Edinburgh, in the shape of a long letter from himself to Alfred—intended, however, fully as much for the sister as the brother. It is needless to tell with what rapture this letter was hung over, and read, and re-read, until every word was engraven on her heart. Eleanor acknowledged to herself, with thankfulness, what a diminution of the pain of absence was the cir-

cumstance of Alfred's being the medium of communication between herself and Clifton — reproached herself for giving way to despondency, and laid down resolutions of unwearied mental employment, and cultivation of those abilities which she knew that he valued so highly, as the best means of quieting her sorrow.

From its silent dominion, however, another species of distress very speedily aroused her, in the sudden illness of her brother. Not more than ten days after Clifton's departure, Alfred was seized with one of those attacks of inflammation in the chest, to which, as he himself had said to his friend, he always had been subject, although during the last winter and spring he had not suffered from them. The present, though violent and alarming at first, being arrested at the outset by the usual remedy of copious bleeding, was very soon got under, and he was not even many days confined to his room ; but the debility which it left behind did not so easily give way, and to the anxious heart of his sister was infinitely more alarming. The utmost efforts of Alfred to reassure her could not disguise his loss of strength, to a degree much greater than the short duration of his illness seemed to warrant, and its very slow and imperfect return, and her uneasiness on his account ; was the more painful from being repressed and concealed, in a measure, even from herself.

He did, however, apparently recover, so far at least as to resume his usual habits ; and by the time he was able to pay attention to it, a great

deal of business pressed upon him, in the shape of the winding-up of the Cargarth Trust affairs, which Mr. Anstruther had now brought near to a conclusion. It was with extreme regret that Eleanor found these matters brought before her brother at a time when he was little fitted to undertake them, and earnestly did she entreat him, if possible, to delay entering into such fatiguing details of business, until his strength should be more established, and rather to consent to leaving Edinburgh at present, for some change of air and scene. This Alfred willingly promised to do ere long, but in the meantime he assured his sister that his present engagements brooked no delay, and must be completed in the first instance. Little did Eleanor dream of his meaning, the feeling which pressed upon his mind that unless his worldly affairs were now arranged, for him there was no future period wherein to discharge that duty! She even flattered herself into the persuasion of a decided improvement in his looks and strength, deceived as many, many a fond heart has been by the treacherous glow and brightness of the insidious disease under which Alfred was rapidly sinking. He did not deceive himself, but he knew that the fearful truth would burst all too soon upon the heart which was twined to his by every cord of its existence, and he gladly hailed any means of warding off its inevitable approach, and of strengthening and invigorating the mental and bodily frame of his beloved sister, for the fiery trial that lay before her.

On this account, whilst still engrossed by the business alluded to, he urgently entreated Eleanor's acceptance of a pressing invitation to herself and Clara, from Mrs. Richardson, to spend some time at Laverockhaugh. Eleanor at first refused to leave him, but at length was won upon by his earnest wish that she should go, and reluctantly consented. Accordingly, Mrs. Falconar, who had remained constantly at Braid with her youngest daughter since the time of Eleanor's memorable visit there, now brought Clara to town, quite restored to health and bloom, and the two sisters accompanied Mrs. Richardson to her lovely villa, one day near the end of July.

Alfred was thus left alone with his mother and Harry, whose preparations for the Academy Exhibition, previous to the holidays, were now intense and engrossing. Scarcely less so were the numerous details of business in which his elder brother, with feverish anxiety to fulfil all the duties connected with his worldly arrangements, was at this period daily involved. Often, in after days, did an incident recur to Harry's memory, which at the time made upon him no more than the transient impression incident to the mind of a child. This was that one day, on his abruptly entering his brother's sitting-room, armed with a copy of verses, in which he required assistance, he found Mr. Anstruther sitting with Alfred, and that the former, rising on his approach, walked to the window, pulled out his snuff-box and handkerchief, took snuff vehemently, and went through various other evolutions,

which did not, however, serve to disguise from the quick observation of the boy, that, for so very quiet a person, he was in a state of remarkable agitation,—in short, as Harry afterwards imparted to his confidante Clara, “He could have sworn Mr. Anstruther was *greeting*, only who ever heard of anybody greeting but a woman?”

However this might be, Mr. Anstruther and his young friend were very frequently closeted together, for a long period, the fatigue consequent on which interviews told severely upon Alfred after they were over. Day after day the concentration of mind requisite to keep his faculties employed upon business, became more difficult and more exhausting to him. He would sometimes, when left alone, in despair at his own incapacity of attention, push aside his papers, and leaning his head upon his hand, strive to recall and to arrange the ideas which floated through his mind respecting what had just occupied it. In vain—he could not reduce them to order—they wandered over his imagination “without form and void.” His very mind seemed deserting him, and this, the inevitable consequence of its having been overtired in early youth, was a bitter pang. He sat, sometimes for hours, in those warm summer evenings, beside his study-window, at one time unconscious of any particular train of thought, plunged in a vague and wandering reverie; at another, aware of the drifting of his own ideas, striving to collect and to compose them. At such times he felt as though he had already ceased to feel—one

subject made no deeper impression upon him than another. He would think of Cargarth, and picture to himself the dark green woods, in all their luxuriance of summer foliage—he would think of his father's broken heart and premature grave—of Clifton—of his sisters; but over every thought there still hung brooding the same mist of dim and hazy indistinctness; nothing seemed to touch, to come near him, or to assume a tangible shape to his perceptions. Then he would recur to the idea of his own approaching death; but even that thought, in the state of chilly repose into which he had sunk, came like a shadow, and so departed. He could not arrest it—could not fix it before his mental gaze, as a thing of reality; even while, clasping his hands over his feverish brow, as if to shut out the very sight of the material world, he prayed with earnest supplication for the removal of the heavy cloud that lay upon him, for strength to prepare his soul for the awful reckoning that lies beyond death and the grave.

Alfred felt indeed as if, in Edinburgh, he had not peace to die. Edinburgh had been the theatre of his worst trials and his earliest sorrows. There the bitter anticipation of his father's approaching ruin had come upon him—there cloud had darkened into storm, and suspense increased into certainty—there days and nights of unwearied mental toil had parched his brain and fevered his blood in very boyhood, and care had sat upon his soul like a heavy load. There, too, at length, his fondest hopes had been doomed to frustration;

and there he had still before his eyes the daily spectacle of his mother's weak submission to the impertinent and domineering interference of his aunts,—a minor evil, certainly, yet not the less painfully irritating, from the total privation of repose which it involved. Few things can be more distressing to the mind of one who, in anticipation of a speedy close to his earthly concerns, wishes to banish from his thoughts all that speaks to them of human passions and human vanities, than to find these, at every instant, forcibly recalled and brought before him in the odious littleness belonging to their worst modifications. The two aunts—now that the town began to get empty, and their circle of visiting-acquaintance narrowed in consequence—found more leisure to bestow their tediousness on Mrs. Falconar; and even when Alfred was too busy, or too much indisposed, to enjoy their questions, remarks, and animadversions in his own person, it by no means followed that this circumstance secured him any exemption from the disagreeable and provoking repetition of them at second hand. Mrs. Falconar took especial care that her son should hear them all, embellished by her comments; and enlarged to him, at every spare moment, on “that most unfortunate affair between Eleanor and Mr. Clifton,” and on “the infatuated girl's rejection of that excellent young man Mr. Charteris,” and repeated, and re-repeated, the lessons which she had learnt upon both subjects, which afforded too ample a field for the varieties of oratory in her counsellors, to

be speedily laid in oblivion. In short, there was a hideous aridity of feeling, a total absence of rest, in all that surrounded Alfred, and for rest and quietness he daily felt more and more of the heart-sick longing which so frequently accompanies decline, and looked forward with intense desire to the termination of his business-concerns enabling him to escape from his present situation, and from the many hateful accompaniments of hot summer weather in a town.

About ten days, meanwhile, had elapsed since Eleanor and Clara had gone to Laverockhaugh, where the life they led was one of the utmost quiet and tranquillity. The only other visitor in the house was an elderly lady, an aunt of Colonel Richardson's, to whom much of Mrs. Richardson's time was devoted, thus leaving her young guests abundant leisure for solitary walks amongst the beautiful scenery of the neighbourhood; and these were varied by driving with the rest of the party,—in short, by anything that anybody chose to do. Every one was at perfect liberty. Dinner-time very generally brought some guests from Edinburgh, or from the neighbouring villas; but, in all cases, nothing could be more agreeable than the situation of a visitor at Laverockhaugh. There was a degree of gentle kindness, and of motherly tenderness, in the manners of Mrs. Richardson, which was beyond measure soothing to girls who had experienced so little of either from their own mother and female relatives. As to the Colonel, no father could have felt a warmer interest in his youthful guests,

and both his lady and himself possessed, in no common degree, the art of making those who lived in their house feel perfectly at home. Clara enjoyed her visit to the utmost capability of her joyous nature; and to Eleanor, if the days could not be said to pass in happiness, they at least glided on in peace.

A few days after their arrival, Eleanor received a packet from Alfred, in which he said little of himself, and dwelt principally on the details of a long letter from Clifton. This packet, moreover, contained one thing which, for the moment, banished every thought but that of rapturous delight from the heart of Eleanor,—no other than an exquisite miniature of Guy himself, which had just reached Alfred from him; a most striking resemblance, and in which the artist had done full justice to so fine a subject. She hung over it with that intense enjoyment imparted by a successful effort of the “serenely silent art,” and which approaches most nearly to the happiness of re-union with the absent object of affection.

Eleanor’s anxiety on the subject of her brother’s health, however, was such as to induce her to resist the hospitable entreaties with which she and Clara were assailed to prolong their visit beyond the time mentioned. On the last day but one previous to that she had fixed upon for their return home, the sisters had walked out together to the banks of the Esk, not far from the house. It was a lovely, warm afternoon; and whilst Clara rambled a little way on in*

search of wild flowers, Eleanor seated herself on a spot where she well remembered having sat with Clifton, on the unforgotten day when her first visit had been paid to that place, and abandoned herself to that sad yet sweet reverie caused by such a recollection, and to the dreamy state of mind induced by watching the flow of the rippling water. Her eyes fixed upon its ever-changing course, she was unconscious how deep was her abstraction until she was aroused by a voice behind her. She looked up with a start, and perceived Miss Hay.

“ You were thinking very deeply, Eleanor, love,” said this unexpected visitor, with a smile, as she sat down beside her.

“ I was very absent, Miss Hay,” replied Eleanor, blushing deeply, “ but I hadn’t the remotest idea of seeing you here. When did you come, and how ?”

“ I drove out with my brother-in-law, Mr. Ainslie,” replied Miss Hay, “ and have not been twenty minutes arrived. Understanding from Mrs. Richardson that you and Clara had walked out in this direction, I thought I should like to go in search of you. How delicious it does feel here, after the hot streets !”

“ So delicious,” said Eleanor, “ that one feels sorry to think of returning to them. But Clara and I must do so immediately, for we are unhappy at the idea of Alfred being left alone. Have you seen mamma or him lately, Miss Hay ?”

“ I paid them a visit yesterday evening,” re-

plied Miss Hay. "Have you heard from Alfred lately, Ellen?"

"A few days ago; and I had a note from mamma yesterday, who said that she thought him a great deal better. How do *you* think he looks, Miss Hay?"

"I thought, last night—" Miss Hay began, then stopped short, in evident agitation. The quick observation of Eleanor perceived this in an instant. She raised her eyes to her companion's face, and there was something in its expression that struck her as strangely sad and ominous.

"Miss Hay," she exclaimed, "there is something the matter—something terrible is the matter! Tell me—tell me, for God's sake!"

"My dear Eleanor," returned Miss Hay, "don't be so frightened. No, love! there is nothing terrible the matter. Alfred certainly did *not* appear to me looking well; but there is no reason for such alarm. I only think—"

"I see what you think!" exclaimed Eleanor, in an accent of despair; "you think him worse—very ill! Why—why have I been so credulous? Why did I consent to come here? and, oh! why did mamma not write me the truth?" Her voice was broken by sobs, as, pressing Miss Hay's hand, she conjured her to tell her all—to hide nothing from her—to let her know the worst! Alas, Miss Hay herself scarce knew the worst! She could only entreat her young friend to be calm, whilst the tears, which interrupted her own gentle voice, bore testimony to the depth

and sincerity of her sympathy—assuring her, that, although she did not consider Alfred looking by any means so well as he had done a short while before, although he had appeared to her, on the previous night, to be exceedingly reduced in strength, she yet hoped much from greater quiet, now that his affairs, as he had informed her, were finally settled—from change of scene—above all, from his sister's care. “Your mother, my love,” she added, “does not appear to be in the least aware of the precarious state of Alfred's health; I therefore should decidedly advise your return. Indeed, to shew you that I hide nothing from you, I will tell you, that my not being aware of your plans having been decided, and my knowledge that you could not be sensible how advisable it was that you should be with your brother, were the motives of my visit here to-day. Now, Ellen, you see that you may trust what I say.”

“How kind—how very kind!” murmured poor Eleanor, as she found relief to her heart in a flood of tears.

“Not kind, Ellen,” returned Miss Hay—“not more than doing as I would be done by. I could not feel at rest with such a duty undischarged. And now, dry your eyes, my love—try to compose yourself—Mr. Ainslie's carriage can take us all to town this afternoon, if you wish it.”

Clara, who joined them in a few minutes after this, shared her sister's distress, and her anxiety

to depart, and that evening, accordingly, saw the sisters quit Laverockhaugh, in company with their kind friends. Every instant that she lingered there seemed, to Eleanor, an age of suffering. Her heart filled with self-reproach, notwithstanding her previous unconsciousness of the real situation of affairs; she only longed to expiate her imagined fault, by the devotion of all her future hours to her brother. It was a beautiful sunshiny evening, and all things looked bright and smiling, as the party stood in the portico, and exchanged a sad farewell. As Eleanor received the kind parting kiss of Mrs. Richardson, and the warm-hearted Colonel's paternal squeeze of the hand, she could not help reverting, with a pang of silent agony, to the *last time* she had stood upon that threshold in act to quit it; but even that thought came accompanied by self-reproach.

“ Guy would not have deserted his duties to brood over sorrows of his own, as I have been doing,” she said to herself. “ Why was I persuaded to leave Edinburgh?”

Poor Eleanor forgot, in the sorrow of her warm and ingenuous heart, that affection is no skilful augur—that affection is a very worshipper of delusion, a courtier of any dream that will veil reality, where reality would be anguish. Many, most of those, who have known what it was to stand by the graves of those they best loved, have also known what it was to groan, to weep, in fruitless lamentation of the strange blindness

that held out against conviction of their danger, clear as the noonday sun. We do most truly bear about with us “un être passager qui implore la durée:”* human love is an immortal plant, alien to the cold contact of the air of mortality.

* De Staël.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Oh, could we live in visions! could we hold
 Delusion faster, longer, to our breast,
When it shuts from us, with its mantle’s fold,
 That which we see not, and are therefore blest!
But they, our loved and loving—they to whom
 We have pour’d out our souls in joy and gloom—
Their looks and accents, unto us address’d,
Have been a language of familiar tone,
Too long to breathe at last dark sayings and unknown.”

MRS. HEMANS.

ELEANOR found Alfred looking worse, by a great deal, than when she had left Edinburgh. It was true, that beyond a slight cough, he seemed to have no formed complaint; and the surprise and pleasure of his sisters’ return imparted, on the evening of their arrival, a degree of animation to his conversation and manner, which disguised for the time the extent of his weakness and indisposition. But on the following morning, on his entering the drawing-room a little after twelve o’clock—for he was unable to appear at breakfast—Eleanor read a dark confirmation of her fears in his languid eye, his parched and burning hand,

and the unsuccessful efforts which he made to conceal his illness ; and could only wonder, in grief and irrepressible indignation, at the extraordinary blindness of her mother, who evidently was not in the least aware of it, and who, indeed, would only have availed herself of the knowledge to worry her son with complaints, reproaches, and lamentations, over her own injuries and misfortunes. Being well aware that such would have been the only effect produced, had Alfred let her perceive the real state of his health, Eleanor could not wonder at his having studiously concealed all symptoms of indisposition from his mother ; but she felt that this must not be permitted to continue, and could only bitterly lament that it should have continued so long.

“ How beautifully the sun is shining to-day, Ellen,” languidly observed Alfred, a few minutes after his entrance, when Eleanor and he found themselves left alone, by Clara receiving a summons from her mother to another room. “ I should like to be able to take a long walk with you. Do you know, love, I am quite grieved that you and Clara should have returned to town this warm weather. I wish you had remained a little longer at Laverockhaugh.”

“ I wish *I* had never gone, Alfred,” answered Eleanor, in a low and trembling voice, bending her head over a glass of flowers as she spoke, to conceal the tears which were fast gathering in her eyes.

“ Why, dearest ?” asked her brother, gently taking her hand. “ Is there anything the matter, Ellen ?” he anxiously added, seating himself by

her side, and putting his arm round her, as he received no answer to his question. "Look up, Ellen, and tell me what is grieving you?"

Eleanor did look up for an instant in her brother's altered countenance; then clasping her arms round his neck, she hid her face in his breast—the tears, which would no longer be restrained, bursting forth at his last words. "Forgive me, Alfred," sobbed she; "I know it is wrong in me to annoy you by my foolish crying. I—I will not be so weak again; but I have been so wrong—so very wrong! I have acted so selfishly!"—Her voice was again choked by weeping.

"Wrong, Eleanor? Selfish—*you* selfish!" exclaimed Alfred, in astonishment and anxiety. "My own dearest girl, what is the matter? What can have happened?"

"What can have happened, Alfred? Have I not left you?—left you, whilst you were so ill—whilst you must have missed me so? I shall never, never forgive myself!"

"Is that all?" said Alfred, tenderly kissing her cheek. "Dearest Eleanor, don't be such a little goose. I declare you frightened me. Left me! And why not? I am not ill, love—I am not, indeed."

"Not ill? Oh, Alfred!"

"That is," returned he, smiling, "not very ill. I do feel a little out of sorts, that must be owned; but I shall soon be better. Now don't cry, love; and don't alarm yourself so needlessly."

"I will not cry, Alfred," said Eleanor, raising her head, and wiping the tears from her cheeks;

“ but you must—you *must* promise me to consult Dr. I—— again immediately.”

“ Dr. I—— has never taken leave of me, dearest,” replied Alfred, gently. “ I expect a visit from him this afternoon.” Then, as he caught her alarmed and anxious glance, “ Don’t, my beloved Ellen,” he added—“ don’t terrify yourself; you ought to be pleased to find me amending my old carelessness of my health, for which my mother has so often scolded me.”

“ Oh, Alfred!” exclaimed Eleanor, struggling to restrain her tears, “ why—why did you leave me in ignorance of all this? Was it kind to let me delude myself, and so remain absent from you?”

“ My own dear girl,” said Alfred, “ don’t say so; don’t torment yourself unnecessarily. I never dreamt, Ellen, of leaving you in ignorance that I—that I did not feel so well as I had done; but until within the last two days I have been engrossed by these trust affairs, which are now at an end, and which have over-fatigued me a good deal. I could not leave them unsettled, and I thought it such a pity that you should not enjoy the country during the time I was so engaged. But I meant to have written to you, had you not announced to my mother that you and Clara were about to return, to ask you to do so, in about a week. By that time I thought our plans would be arranged.”

“ What plans, dearest Alfred?” asked Eleanor. “ No,” she added, hastily interrupting herself,

“don’t tell me any more—you are exhausted by talking.”

“It is only a faintness,” said Alfred, leaning back upon the sofa; “I shall be better directly.”

Unconscious of the secret cause of agitation, in the thought of all he must one day bring his lips to tell her—which, in her brother’s weak state, had thus overcome him, Eleanor struggled against her distress, whilst endeavouring to restore him. She supported his head, and bathed his temples with eau de Cologne, and Alfred, who had not fainted, in a short while was able to resume the conversation. He then informed his sister that Dr. I—— had strongly recommended his making a trial of the climate of Bute; and, having many friends in the west of Scotland, had most kindly volunteered to inquire about houses in Rothesay for him, an answer to which inquiries he expected immediately. Alfred could not repress a wish, half-smilingly uttered—but, as Eleanor felt, prompted by too painful experience,—that it were possible for his sisters *alone* to accompany him thither. He added, that languid and unfit for exertion as he felt, he had not yet summoned resolution to unfold Dr. I——’s advice and opinions to his mother, in dread of the scene which would most probably ensue. This office Eleanor at once undertook to discharge, and soon after quitted the room for that purpose.

She found Mrs. Falconar in her own apartment, with Clara, looking rather perplexed in spirit, by her side, and an open letter in her hand.

This letter, as, without leaving her eldest daughter time to speak, she at once proceeded to inform her, was from Sir Anthony, and contained nothing of less extraordinary importance than an invitation to Wellwood Castle, for herself, one of her daughters, and Harry. "He regretted," Sir Anthony wrote, "not having it in his power to extend the invitation to *all* the members of his sister's family; but it so happened, that before the approaching 12th of August, every corner of his house, extensive as it was, would be filled, as he expected Lady Wellwood's elder brother, Sir Henry Osborne, his lady, and five children; her second brother, Captain Osborne, of the navy, with *his* lady; her uncle and aunt, Sir Philip and Lady Dalrymple; her cousin, Lady Margaret Horne, with her son and daughter; her nephew, Sir Joseph Nesbitt; and, besides sundry other guests, who would come and go, two Oxford companions of his son, John, who were to spend a night or two at Wellwood, on their way to a shooting-lodge, which they had taken near the forest of Braemar. He hoped," continued Sir Anthony, "in the course of his sister's visit, to have an opportunity of conversing with her on the subject of certain painful family matters which had lately reached his ear, respecting an unfortunate entanglement entered into by his niece, Eleanor, and the part which he regretted to find her elder brother had been so ill-advised as to take in the affair, but the discussion of this theme must be reserved till they should meet."

This portion of the epistle Mrs. Falconar did

not judge necessary to impart to her daughters, and all unconscious of her own interest in her uncle's missive, Eleanor sympathized in the conflict of feelings, between pleasure and fear, which had arrayed Clara's face in an April cloud, on her mother's peremptory decision that *she* should be the companion of her visit, but at the same time experienced a sense of relief in the feeling that this invitation would serve the purpose of diverting her mother's attention from the injury which she would otherwise have felt inflicted upon her by the illness of her son. The result justified her anticipations. On her taking advantage of a pause to begin speaking on the subject of her uneasiness respecting Alfred, and thus introduce Dr. I——'s advice, she found that Mrs. Falconar, though in some degree rendered anxious and uncomfortable by the enforced knowledge of his state of health, did not, by any means, receive it in the same spirit which she would have done the day before; nor were her questions, fears, and reproaches—first addressed to her daughters, and afterwards to Alfred—so irritating or so numerous as they had expected. Another very blessed consequence of this fortunate invitation was, that it would leave Alfred to his sister's care alone for the first few weeks of his removal to Rothesay; and afterwards, when her mother joined them, Eleanor flattered herself that there would be such a decided improvement in his health, as to render that a matter of little consequence. Poor Clara, on discovering Alfred's destination, earnestly begged to be

excused the visit to uncle Anthony, and permitted to accompany him and Eleanor at once. But to this request Mrs. Falconar would, on no account, accede, notwithstanding Clara's tears, and the evident disappointment of the others, to whom her kind and joyous temper would have been an invaluable blessing at such a time. If happiness on earth consist in blindness to the future, Mrs. Falconar was pre-eminently happy. She took it for granted that her son would very speedily be restored to health, and prepared, without a shade of fear, for an immediate fulfilment of her new engagement. Clara, too, whose hopeful nature was slow to admit the possibility of evil coming nigh to those whom she loved, persuaded herself that Alfred would soon recover, and was comforted by the prospect of joining him and Eleanor at Rothesay in the course of a month; and Harry, at an age when sorrow seems a thing of no existence, felt nothing but delight in the prospect of the holiday pleasures of the country, qualified only by a secret dread of being taken to task by uncle Anthony. Thus the party set off for the Castle in spirits very different from those of Eleanor, as she contemplated many probabilities which they could not or would not see. And yet she, too, hoped—hoped fondly, sanguinely. Who does not, at her age? We hope on in this world, even though, one by one, it has been our lot to see our best hopes wither and die—how much more, then, in youth, ere time have brought that harsh experience which must reach our hearts at last.

Not many days thence found Eleanor and Alfred established in the fair little town of Rothesay, which lies so sweetly embosomed among its sheltering hills, overlooking a smiling sea, beneath a mild and genial sky. The house they occupied was amongst the most commodious afforded by the not too magnificent accommodations of the island, detached from and standing somewhat above the town, in that quarter denominated the East Bay. The windows of the sitting-room commanded a beautiful view of the Bay, and of the opposite Argyllshire coast; and the house itself was sufficiently distant from the shore to escape the contamination diffused around the neighbourhood of the pier by the unsavoury process of fish-curing which is carried on there, and which forms the only disagreeable accompaniment to the retirement and the loveliness of Rothesay.

The place, as usual at that season, was pretty well filled by the accustomed complement of strangers, principally from the western metropolis, to whose numbers every Saturday's steamer brought a large addition, whilst that of Monday as constantly diminished them, bearing back the men of cottons and sugar-casks to the theatre of their week-day labours. But of those denizens the subjects of our narrative knew nothing, beyond an occasional encounter during their short walks. They found Rothesay as complete and as calm a retirement as their hearts could desire, and the life they led there as perfect a contrast as might be to the fever and anxiety which, with

but few intervals of rest, had been their portion for some years back.

The element of youth is action, not repose; it abhors monotony; the calm and still routine of an unvaried life is no sphere for it;—and this is most especially true of the youth of men. They all think like young Guiderius—

“ Haply this life is best,
If quiet life is best—sweeter to you
That have a sharper known,—well corresponding
With your stiff age; but unto us it is
A cell of ignorance—travelling abed,—
A prison for a debtor that not dares
To stride a limit.”

And yet, if Guiderius lived, when restored to his rights in that stormy court, to reach the age of him whom he had so long called father, he doubtless learned, by that time, to feel as old Bellarius did. We all discover, in the course of years, that there is much peace and repose in monotony, and that peace and repose form the better portion of all the happiness we pilgrims to another land may venture to demand, or may dare to rejoice in. But it is possible, even in youth, to make this discovery. Continued and painful mental excitation, the creation of o'er-laboured thought, disappointment and fruitless struggling, have all been, in some cases, the lot of youth; and the sure effect of these causes is to induce that longing for rest which, in general, more slowly advances with the steps of advancing age. The truth of this was proved by Alfred Falconar, in the feelings of relief and soothing which stole over him in his new abode, and told him that

here he might die in peace—here find time to compose his thoughts to the awful realities before him.

But the immediate effect of the change to so mild a climate, and all its important concomitants, was to work an alteration, apparently the most beneficial, on his health and spirits. It was, in the words of an eloquent writer,* “as the rolling away of a palpable and suffocating cloud.” Not for years had Alfred felt his mind so composed and happy, and not for a long period had his every faculty and perception been so keenly awake. Books, the dear companions of all his life, were now no longer sealed to him, as they had been during the last dreary months—his soul seemed gifted with new energies hitherto unsuspected. It was for these blessings that his most fervent gratitude was offered to Heaven. Even now he had no hope of recovery—he felt that within which told him that earth must soon cease to be his home; but was it not a happiness that his last days on earth should be unembittered by the dull throbbing of a heart which felt, whilst it hated itself for the feeling, as if its capacities for love were becoming cold and dead within it? Was it not a happiness that his soul should pass, with all its faculties bright and unimpaired, into the presence of Him who gave it? When he compared his present sensations with those which had oppressed him in Edinburgh, he recognised the difference with the deepest thankfulness.

The consideration had more than once occurred

* Mrs. Jameson.

to Alfred, whether or not it were his duty to inform his sister how vain were any expectations of his ultimate restoration to health; but when he perceived how happy her revived hopes had made her—when he saw the influence which her present life of tranquillity and repose was exercising in restoring her spirits, and in fortifying her mind—he acknowledged to himself that the act of destroying these hopes, and of embittering that tranquillity, would be one requiring courage nearly superhuman. And he knew the nature of the heart's affections too well, not to be aware how vain is the idea that any preparation for a stroke, like that which hung over the unconscious head of Eleanor, can serve to break its force, or to diminish one item in the train of agonies which it must inflict when it comes. Unless we could kill that which is immortal, the spirit of hope within us—unless we could at once annihilate the dreadful alternations between that Hope and her dark comrade, Fear—unless we could exhaust by anticipation the anguish which, so far from exhausting, anticipation only causes us to endure twice repeated—unless we could do all these things, not one of which we can ever do, preparing us for the loss of those we love is a needless cruelty. Alfred would not, could not, so long as concealment was in his power, trouble the last hours of comparative happiness which might ever, at least for many a day, be allotted to the heart of his gentle sister. He strove, by imperceptible efforts, to lead her mind from the sorrows and vicissitudes of earth, to the peace and unchangeableness of

the better country beyond the grave; he endeavoured to render her last hours with the companion and guide of her youth, such as should leave an impression upon her mind less allied to this world than to another; but he could not bear as yet to let her *know* they were the last. And Eleanor was happy in her ignorance, for in the brightening eye and the renovated animation of her brother, she read grounds for a hope which she knew not to be delusive, and happy, because she was with him who had always been her dearest companion; she felt herself to be of consequence to his happiness, and she was living far removed from all that could grieve or harass her. There was but one person wanting to complete the group, yet even of him she heard so often through his constant correspondence with Alfred, and his letters breathed such a spirit of resolution in the path which he had undertaken, and such an unshaken trust in their re-union, that they never failed to inspire her mind with fresh hope and vigour, even whilst she deplored his absence.

As for Guy Clifton, his heart could not resist the impression of Alfred's amended health, which the tone of his letters was naturally calculated to inspire. It is true that from him his friend had no secrets, that he never attempted to conceal from him how delusive he felt all appearance of his own amendment to be; yet Clifton still hoped on. The reality was too agonizing to be dwelt upon. He had nothing but Hope to cheer his solitude, and brighten his arid mental toils, and

he could not bid her depart, when she whispered that he might still retain the friend who was dear to him as his own soul—than whom Eleanor alone was more precious in his eyes—and with whose life the happiness of Eleanor was so entwined. His letters to Alfred at all times breathed a spirit of cheerfulness, often far exceeding that which he really felt; for one of Clifton's most distinguishing characteristics was a total absence of selfishness—that rarest of all virtues in a man—and, consequently, it never occurred to him to relieve his own melancholy sensations in saddening his absent friends by their detail.

CHAPTER VII.

“ The sylvan race our active nymphs pursue,
Man is not all the game they have in view ;
In woods and fields their glory they complete ;
There Master Betty leaps a five-barr’d gate,
While fair Miss Charles to toilets is confined,
Nor rashly tempts the barb’rous sun and wind.”

YOUNG.

“ Often together have we talk’d of death.

Edmund, we did not err ;
Our best affections here,
They are not like the toys of infancy—
The soul out-grows them not—
We do not cast them off.
Oh ! if it could be so,
It were, indeed, a dreadful thing to die !”

SOUTHEY.

LETTER FROM CLARA FALCONAR TO ELEANOR.

“ Wellwood Castle, August 26.

“ DEAREST ELEANOR,—We are so very much delighted to hear your good accounts of Alfred ! I hope he will soon get quite well now. Between you and me, I was always sure that he never would till he was at some distance from home. There is something, I think, in the air, the at-

mosphere, of *Aunts* overshadowing our house, that predisposes to an irritation of the nervous system, extremely unfavourable to the restoration either of health or good-humour, when the latter quality happens to take French leave of one, which you are aware it will sometimes do. Not that I think you or Alfred know so well about that as I grieve to own that I do; but at any rate, I flatter myself that my theory is very philosophical, as well as just. I wish, dearest, I might have gone with you. I think you would both have been the better for me to tease you into mirth, as Guy Clifton used to say I did. I get quite envious when I read your descriptions of the happy, quiet life you lead, with your books, and drawings, and conversation, and the delightful walks near Rothesay, for though I enjoy our visit here, and have a great deal of amusement, I had much rather be near you and Alfred, at present. Mamma, however, has not yet fixed a day for our departure. She seems quite happy, and the only thing I don't quite like is that she and Uncle Anthony are very often closeted together in the library, of which conjunction I have an undefined dread, I can't exactly tell why. As to Harry, he is in an absolute boy's Paradise, for he has got Jemmy Osborne, Sir Henry's son, about his own age, to play with, and they fly about all day long, riding ponies, fishing in the burns, and climbing trees together. I am not so fortunate as to have any particular companion; but, nevertheless, I contrive to be tolerably contented. And now I must tell you all about everybody.

“ The party enumerated in my uncle’s letter are all here at present, with the exception of John and his Oxonian friends. We found them here; and they started on the 9th, in a dog-cart, that they might reach their shooting-quarters in good time. I dare say, Ellen, you have quite forgotten what John is like. *I* had; but to give you an accurate description of him would require a more skilful pen than mine. Anthony Wellwood is a *very* great man, in his own opinion, and Richard a fine lady, in male attire; while Matilda, I sometimes think, is exactly *vice versa*; but John!—John transcends all three; or rather, he combines the characteristics of all three, heightened by some qualities peculiarly his own. He is absolutely odious. I did all I could to resist my feelings of hatred towards him, but it would not do—Nature was irresistible; and hate him I did each succeeding hour more than the last. The only person, besides his own family and his two friends, whom I ever saw him speak to, while he stayed, was Miss Horne, who had arrived before her mamma and brother, and the Osbornes and Dalrymples, who did not come till the day John and his friends left. Miss Horne is not exactly pretty, but I believe she is very fashionable, and has a large fortune, yet, I think, considering our near relationship, the young gentleman might have divided his civilities a little more impartially. You are not to suppose from this now, Ellen, that my mortified vanity makes me unjust to John’s merits, for the only feeling this circumstance gave me was astonishment at such want

of common good-breeding, and I do not think any attention from him could have reconciled me to him. There appeared to me, with all his impertinence, such a degree of what I have heard Guy Clifton call *tuft-hunting* about him—such a—; in short, I must not fill up my paper with abuse of John, for, not having seen, I cannot expect you to appreciate him properly, so I shall only add, that I was quite glad when he went away. His friends were, the Honourable Pembroke Arlingford and Sir William Maynard—the former such an ugly little man! but so lively and agreeable, that I liked him exceedingly. *You know*, Ellen, that I don't consider fine eyes and Grecian noses indispensable ingredients in agreeability—indeed, I rather enjoy ugly people, for variety's sake. Sir William was a very gentlemanlike personage, very tall, very thin, very like a darning-needle, in short—with a long nose, a self-complacent mouth, a soft voice, and an insinuating smile. He was very musical, and employed himself chiefly in singing duets with Matilda, and accompanying Miss Horne's playing on the German flute.

“ At present, we have not only the above-mentioned Osbornes, Dalrymples, and Hornes, in the house, but likewise Mr. Edward Herries, and Mr. Basil Rutherford, younger, of that *ilk*, both friends of Richard's; and besides these, there are people constantly coming and going—shooting in the morning, and dining at night. I do not think Richard and his friends, or Mr. Horne,

can talk on any other subjects than guns, dogs, hounds, horses, and the Caledonian Hunt. They can gossip, too, and not very good-naturedly either, about balls and young ladies ; but as I don't know many of the young people they talk of, I don't find their conversation quite so amusing as Matilda, Miss Horne, and Emmy Osborne seem to do.

“ In the morning, after breakfast, we very rarely see any more of Matilda, for she generally goes out on horseback with the sportsmen, when they set off to shoot, taking Richard's place, who as generally remains at home, and lounges out to ride (*for a complexion*, as Aunt Annie used to say!) in the afternoon. I hear a strange report of Matilda's having brought down a grouse the other day, with Mr. Horne's gun ; but wishing to adhere scrupulously to facts, I merely mention it *as* a report. Poor Miss Horne rode out one day with the shooting-party, but returned tired to death, kept her bed all the following day, and has ever since been content to share the drawing-room before luncheon, and walks and drives after with the rest of us womankind. Then, in the evening, we always have music, and very often dancing—only, that when there are no strangers, we are obliged to take Harry or Jemmy Osborne to make out a quadrille ; for whenever Richard thinks his services in that way will be required, he goes into the back drawing-room, extends himself upon a sofa, and, on Matilda's pursuing and entreating him to stand up, answers, with

a languid yawn—‘ Oh, Gad, my dear child, I’m positively knocked up—quite worn out! I *cawn’t dawnce*, ’pon my honour, Matilda—I *cawn’t*, indeed ; give you my word !’—Don’t you think, Ellen, they really ought to change dresses ? Matilda is invulnerable to fatigue or exhaustion, bodily or mental. After a day such as I have described, she always appears in the evening so beautifully dressed, with hair in such splendid *crêpe*, blooming like a rose ; and sings, plays, dances, flirts, and talks for hours, unweariedly, enjoying everybody’s unconcealable astonishment at her wonderful strength, and evidently congratulating herself on the contrast she presents to Miss Horne, who is rather a languishing person, and to Emmy Osborne, who has just come home from a London school with what, Mr. Oswald used to say, all girls brought from school with them—a threatening of spine complaint and universal accomplishments ! I sometimes wonder whether, if everybody else were endowed with Amazonian strength, Matilda would not become very delicate, for the sake of singularity.

“ Captain and Mrs. Osborne go away this afternoon ; and Aunt Moray and Grace come tomorrow. Then, too, comes Sir Joseph Nesbitt, M.P. ; so I shall retain my letter, both for the purpose of getting a frank from him, and for the sake of telling you all ‘ how and about ’ Grace, as she appears under the roof of which she talks with such wonderful veneration. Good-bye, till then, dearest Ellen.”

“ 28th.—I have nothing particular to tell you, after all, dearest Ellen, respecting Grace, except that I have no patience with her. There is such an absence of all dignity and self-respect about her manner; she is so delighted with everything at Wellwood—not from any motive of affection to its inhabitants, that is very plain—but because she thinks it a very fine thing to stay here, and to be the relation of such great people! And she does so worship Matilda, who treats her completely *de haut en bas*—I must confess, not much to my surprise. Grace’s obsequious admiration of Matilda, and unqualified assent to everything she chooses to say, reminds me of a story Mr. Oswald once told me (you remember what amusing anecdotes he used to tell, Ellen!) about a ‘led captain,’ as he called him, of some rich man’s, whose office it was to agree to every proposition his patron laid down, and one day the patron was more than usually oratorical, and delivered a very long string of opinions, whilst at every pause in his harangue the led captain chimed in with a note of admiration. At last, the poor man, having exhausted his whole stock of expletives, was quite at a loss for words to express his reverence, and still the monologue proceeded, till, on a fresh pause for the usual tribute, he clenched the matter with a sweeping decision, and emphatically pronounced—‘Sir, *everything that you say is right!*’ The force of language could no further go;’ and I should decidedly recommend a similar form of speech to Grace, as her feelings lead her quite as far as

the captain's did him, and it would save her a world of trouble in coining polite modes of assent.

“ There goes the gong sounding for luncheon ; so I must draw to a close, and, perhaps, it is as well for me, for instead of participating in my just indignation, you will scold me for being so satirical, as you call me, whenever I speak the honest truth ; don't you, now, Miss Eleanor ?— Well, good-bye, dearest ; I hope we shall soon join you. Give my kindest love, and Harry's, to Alfred, and ever believe me,

“ Your most affectionate sister,

“ CLARA FALCONAR.”

Such a letter as the above, after its contents had been commented upon, naturally led the conversation of Eleanor and Alfred to the subject of their uncle's and Mrs. Moray's present position with regard to each other after their long estrangement, and thence they went on to talk of that most painful but often-witnessed event in families—the disunion of brothers and sisters as they advance in life.

“ How is it possible,” exclaimed Eleanor, “ that such estrangements can take place ? I cannot understand it.”

“ Nor can I,” replied Alfred. “ Nor could I have believed, had I not so often seen it, that it *was* possible. It seems to be a part of the primal curse laid upon us, that our very affections are

often touched by the same character of mutability which attaches to all things else around us. Alas, Ellen ! we ourselves change so much, we cannot wonder, though we must lament, to see others change likewise. And which of us dare say that his heart may not be altered by self-confidence and temptation?"

" But there is something in the love of early years," said Eleanor, " in the very associations of childhood, connected with a brother or a sister, the thousand recollections which none but they can share, there is something in all these that makes after-estrangement and unkindness so incomprehensible to me.

' How is it that such things can be,
As though they ne'er had been ? '

" How, indeed, Eleanor ? How is it possible that the world's blighting breath—the world's clashing or divided interests, can come between two hearts whose infancy was pillow'd on the same bosom, united by the same bond of partaken joy and sorrow, hallowed by the same prayers ? Of all the bitter lessons this life reads us, as we advance along its weary road, this is the bitterest far. And yet how often do we see it thus with those of whom one would least have expected such a woful change!"

" It is worldliness," said Eleanor—" it is the selfishness that people allow to steal over their minds as they advance in life that does it all. *Our* love for each other will never change, Alfred, will it?" she continued, raising her eyes

to her brother's face as she twined her arm in his.

"*Never, Ellen — never,*" returned Alfred, pressing her to his heart. "No, no, there is no danger of our love changing. A sure seal is set to that," he mentally added.

"Oh, if I thought it possible I should ever live to find it alter," exclaimed Eleanor, "how wretched I should be!"

"I think you will never see that day, Ellen," said Alfred. "Do you remember the story of Bozaldab?" he added, after a pause. "What you said just now, love, reminded me of it and its beautiful moral."

"Yes," replied Eleanor. "How fond we used to be of that story! I dare say all parents must feel as Bozaldab did, that he would not have recalled his innocent young son from the grave when it was shewn him what lengthened life would have rendered him."

"Ay, love, nor parents only. Brothers, and sisters, and friends, and those still dearer than friends, were such a fore-knowledge granted them, would perforce think with Bozaldab."

"It is well it is not granted," said Eleanor, "for it would be a terrible alternative."

"Sad, dearest, but not terrible, or only so because of the weakness of our faith. If we believed that the friends whose loss we were left to lament had but gone before us to a land where sin and temptation could never reach them more, and where their affection for us would no more be liable to change or decay, surely we should

not sorrow for them, as we too often do, like those who have no hope."

"Alfred, Alfred! Nature *will* have her way. Is it a light thing to be left alone on earth?"

"Oh, no, Ellen! I never said so. If we did not *feel* sorrow, its use to us would be lost. The eyes which never wept in penitence for one stain of human frailty, shed tears at the grave which contained the object of human affection. But tell me, if you were permitted to foresee that, in future years, temptation would overcome the friend of your youth, or that unkindness would step between you and alienate you, if you perceived that a lengthened life would not send him to the grave purified in the blood of the atonement, would you not rather part with him? Would you not rather have an unchanging friend in Heaven than an estranged or an erring one on earth?"

"For *his* sake I might bring myself to think so," replied Eleanor.

"Ay, Ellen, and for your own. After the first bitterness was over, you would come to feel it so. Bitter in truth it must be to every human heart to undergo such a parting. But from Heaven, Ellen, we shall look back upon the trials and bereavements which have here been sent to purify the nobler and immortal part of our nature, and acknowledge that we could not have dispensed with one of them. Now, love," added Alfred, after a short pause, "it is a beautiful afternoon, get your bonnet, and let us take a ramble on the shore."

Eleanor was speedily equipped for their walk, thinking all the while with delight of the improvement which she fancied that she daily perceived in her brother's health and strength. It was a lovely day, and very warm for the season, but summer is ever loth to quit the shores of Bute. The air was perfectly calm, and the sky cloudless, the little waves came rippling softly on the shore, and broke with a gentle sound among the shells and pebbles,—all things, in short, breathed of peace and tranquillity, as the brother and sister slowly wandered along, arm in arm. Their conversation was of many subjects; at one time partaking of the grave and somewhat melancholy strain which had characterized it before they left the house; at another, diverging to old recollections and anecdotes of former times, to which Alfred seemed now to have a particular pleasure in reverting; and then quitting these topics altogether, to wander over themes more shadowy, the legends of superstition or the beautiful dreams of poetry. On these latter subjects Alfred expatiated with an eloquence and an enthusiasm surpassing any that Eleanor had ever before heard him display. And she shared in his enthusiasm, and hung upon his words, and hailed it all as a pledge of returning health. She little knew that it only gave a surer sign how near was the disunion of the already half-emancipated soul from its earthly tabernacle. When the dungeon walls are tottering to their fall, new streams of light burst in upon the cap-

tive, which could not have reached him whilst they remained strong and unbroken.

Often did Eleanor look back upon their walk. It was *the last* that Alfred and she ever took together! Two days of damp weather succeeding, he was unable to quit the house, and on the third day there came on an attack of inflammation, more violent than he had ever before experienced, and requiring more severe remedies to reduce it. Eleanor, in anguish of mind that baffles description, wrote to request her mother to join them without an hour's delay; and for several days after her arrival, Alfred's life hung in the balance. He did at length get over the attack, and even recovered so far as to be occasionally driven out for half an hour in an open carriage, and to be able to sit up most part of every day, but the degree of strength which he had previously enjoyed returned no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ God of my fathers ! What art thou ?

• • • • •
I am come from my rest, to him I love best.”

BYRON.

“ DID you see Guy Clifton this morning, Henry, while you were in town ? ” inquired Mrs. Lavington of her husband, as he threw himself into an easy chair in the drawing-room of their pretty villa on the Thames.

“ I did, my dear. Shall I ring for dinner ? ”

“ I have just rung. And pray how is he ? ”

“ Who—Clifton ? Why, he looks like a ghost. I wanted him to drive down with me this afternoon ; but he said he was so busy that it was quite impossible.”

“ I wish he had come,” said Mrs. Lavington. “ Except being one week at Pevenley, he has not left these studies of his all summer. I am quite sure such confinement will injure his health.”

“ As to confinement, my dear, you know very well that if he had entered our firm, he would

have had fully more. No profession can be acquired without labour. I fancy Clifton has a far easier life than I had."

"I sometimes doubt, Henry, if it be worth while to waste so many years of life in making money."

"As to that, Mary," replied Mr. Lavington, with a smile, "opinions may differ; but if a man would reap, he needs must sow,—and sowing is hard work sometimes, as my addled brains can testify to-night."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Lavington, musingly,—"quite sure, that Guy has some very particular reason for working so hard. I am convinced he has some attachment in Scotland."

"You women are always finding out that men have attachments, or some such sentimental reason, for everything they do. *I am sure*," pursued Mr. Lavington, taking up a volume of "Bracebridge Hall," one of the new works of that season, "that Irving had you in his eye, Mary, when he imagined Lady Lillycraft. Ah, well, my pet, I shan't quarrel with the propensity. I am not quite old enough in the ways of matrimony for that."

"I wish you were not old enough in the ways of matrimony to leave your wife every day for your counting-house, in this lovely autumn weather. But to return to Guy, Henry. I fear he is fagging himself to death."

"Nay," replied Mr. Lavington, "it is not *that*, in my opinion; but he is in wretchedly low

spirits about a friend in Scotland, who, from his account, I suspect is very hopelessly ill."

"Can it be his friend Falconar, of whom he has so often talked to me?" exclaimed Mrs. Lavington.

"Yes, Falconar; that is the name. Indeed, he seems almost to have resolved to go down immediately to Scotland to see him. So I made him promise that, if he decided on going, he would give us a day here before he went—give *you* one, rather,—for I must be in town every morning this week. Ah, thank goodness, there is dinner at last!" as the butler flung open the door.

Mr. Lavington's report was correct, for Clifton had indeed come to the resolution of thus suddenly revisiting Scotland. He found it impossible any longer to restrain his desire of seeing Alfred once more. The delusive hopes which had so long supported his spirits, had now faded away. He had been distressed, in the first place, by a longer gap in their correspondence than had ever before occurred, which had that very morning been terminated by a letter from Alfred, informing him of the renewed illness under which he had suffered, and written in a tone which darkened the feelings of his friend into absolute hopelessness. The very hand-writing of the letter—faint, wavering, and unsteady,—its briefness, and the evident struggle with bodily weakness to which every line bore testimony, all spoke too plainly of the truth. He could no longer conceal from himself that the hours of Alfred

were numbered. The thought of Eleanor weeping over the death-bed of a brother so fondly, so passionately loved,—and the recollection of the fatal 24th of October,—darted through his mind to strengthen and confirm the determination which he had formed. “I must—I must see him once more! I must be with her at such a time!” he exclaimed, as he started at an early hour from a bed, which, during that and several preceding nights, had been sleepless, or only visited by feverish slumbers which brought no rest. It was now the beginning of October,—there was no time to be lost,—and Clifton’s energetic character was not one to trifle with time. In the course of that morning, he had completed all necessary arrangements previous to his absence, and had secured a place in the Glasgow mail for the next day but one, there being none vacant for the following day. The same afternoon found him at Woodlawn, the villa of Mr. Lavington, pursuant to the promise he had given that gentleman.

It was with a singular sensation of lassitude and fatigue that Clifton had executed all the multifarious duties of that morning; and this sensation, accompanied by cold shivering fits and pain in every limb, increased as the day advanced, and so unfitted him for exertion, that it was not without difficulty he could prevail upon himself to keep his engagement with his cousin. The influence of the fresh breeze, and the grateful change from the smoke and stifling atmosphere of London to that of the country, did not,

as he expected they would, dispel these feelings of indisposition; nor was this effected even by the green beauty of Woodlawn, with its sunny terraces sloping down to the river, and its groves and shrubberies, as yet scarcely touched by the hues of autumn, nor by the sweet smiles and affectionate welcome of its kind and pleasing mistress.

“ Do you really mean to set off for Scotland the day after to-morrow, Guy?” she inquired, as, taking his arm, they stepped out at one of the French windows of the drawing-room to stroll on the lawn.

“ I must indeed, Mary,” he replied. “ I wish I had gone long ago.”

“ I do so much wish you could have remained a few days here before you went! You will terrify your Scotch friends, if they see you looking as you do to-day. Indeed, I fear you must be ill?”

“ I am not very well, I must own,” returned he; “ but it is nothing—merely want of sleep and anxiety of mind; which would not be lessened by my remaining here, as you so kindly wish.”

“ I was deeply grieved to hear of the cause of your journey,” said Mrs. Lavington. “ Let us trust things may not be so bad as you dread.”

“ I have no such hope,” he replied, in a melancholy voice. “ My only one is, that I may not arrive too late, which I am haunted by an indefinite presentiment of doing. I wish to Heaven I had not delayed so long! but there are reasons—in short, I was distracted between conflicting

motives. Some other time I will tell you all; my head is not clear enough to-day. Mary," he added, taking his cousin's hand, "you would pity me if you knew—if you could imagine all I have lately suffered."

"I do pity you, dear Guy," she replied, her eyes filling with tears. "I wish I could do more; but sympathy is all that I, or any one, can offer to such sufferings."

"There are few, however," said Clifton, "who can offer so much from the heart; and fewer still from whom one feels inclined to wish for it. But you are one of the few, Mary. I can say more to you, than to any one else on this side of Tweed."

"Ah, Guy!" exclaimed Mary, her feminine propensities, as her husband would have called them, irresistibly impelling her to follow out the track half hinted at in this speech—"ah, Guy! I suspect that there are some people on the other side of Tweed to whom you can say a great deal."

"Do you?" was his reply, with a faint smile, as he turned his eyes towards her, and thought of her resemblance to Eleanor, which this day appeared stronger than usual. "Well, Mary, perhaps you are not much out in your conjecture, and some day or other I shall make you my confessor, but to-day I can scarce speak two sentences connectedly. I never felt so confused and stupid in my life before. You must excuse me to-day."

"Nay, Guy, I am quite satisfied with having a romance to guess at: I never dreamt of pressing

for your confidence ; but I really feel uneasy when I think of your undertaking a journey at present; for I am sure you are far from well, and——don't you hear carriage-wheels?" she exclaimed, interrupting herself—"it must be Henry; let us return to the house and meet him."

The remainder of the evening seemed to Clifton endless in its duration. His sensations of illness increased so rapidly, that it was with difficulty he could force himself to speak, but the ardently-desired change to his own apartment, brought little relief, save in releasing him from the necessity of doing so. The restlessness of fever burned in every nerve—he felt it impossible to sleep, or even to remain in a recumbent posture, but the giddy faintness which accompanied his efforts to raise his head from the pillow, proved the impracticability of quitting it. Meanwhile he was haunted by tormenting visions. No sooner had he dropped into an uneasy sleep, than he started from it in all the fancied haste and perturbation of hearing himself summoned to rise, and set off for Scotland without an instant's delay; then the voice of Eleanor sounded in his ear, imploring him to come to her; then, again, he would awake in all the horror of that worst visitation of a feverish dream,—a sensation as if some one, he knew not who, were in the room standing in awful silence beside his bed, while he felt himself chained down by some invisible force, which prevented his even drawing back the curtain to ascertain the identity of this midnight visitor. So strongly did this delusion pos-

sess him, that his mind, already wandering, could not shake itself free from the idea even when wide awake. Morning, in short, found him in a high fever. The medical man, who was instantly summoned on Mrs. Lavington's learning the illness of her cousin, pronounced the case a very serious one, the fever being caused by extreme and painful mental excitement. For many days Clifton continued very ill, and totally unconscious of passing events, the only alternation in the state of his senses being between stupor and delirium. The only person of whom he evinced the slightest recognition was Mary, and her he constantly addressed by the name of Eleanor,—disclosing, in his ravings, many circumstances which increased in a tenfold degree the sympathy and the uneasiness of his cousin; whilst his repeated allusions to the 24th of October confirmed her in the idea that some urgent reason existed for his presence in Scotland on that day, and augmented her perplexity in reflecting on his sensations when he should discover that to be impossible. Meanwhile, the apprehensions of his medical attendants were so great, that Mr. Lavington felt it his duty to communicate them to his uncles. Mr. Elliot was at that time in Paris, but this summons had the effect of bringing Lord Clifton from Pevenley Castle to London, as rapidly as four horses could whirl his carriage, and of transferring him, in a very short while thereafter to Woodlawn.

His lordship had driyen up to town, malcontent and full of heaviness. It would have

been beyond the angriest of men to have been displeased with his nephew because he was dangerously ill of a fever; but it might be pardoned if a statesman, and man of the world, found a vent to his mental trouble in the reflection that most likely nothing of the sort would have occurred to Guy had he but been pleased to act with common sense, and accept the valuable living of Stoke Westbury, instead of obliging him, Lord Clifton, to bestow it on a cousin whom he could not abide, in order to prevent its going out of the family. In his secret soul, Lord Clifton had a strong liking for his nephew, fanciful and enthusiastic as he deemed him. And it is a melancholy fact, that some very good people in this world are exceedingly apt to get wroth with those whom they like, when any misfortune befalls them, whether from a desire of hiding their own concern under such a guise, or because they really do take it as a personal affront that their friends are not so fortunate as they could wish. Lord Clifton's anger, however, gave place to real concern and distress, when he found Guy so ill as not to recognise him; the manifestation of which feelings at once gained for him the heart of the gentle Mary.

It was not till some days after his lordship's arrival at Woodlawn that any symptoms of amendment appeared in his nephew's health; but at length the fever left him, though in a state of the utmost weakness. When sufficiently recovered to be able to think connectedly, or to ask any questions, it appeared that he had not the

slightest idea of the duration of his illness, and seemed even to have lost recollection of the period at which it had attacked him. He talked of having only been ill for a couple of days, attributing his extreme debility to the extent to which he had been bled, and dwelt incessantly on the absolute necessity for his being able to travel before the 24th of October, and from this delusion the physician declared it indispensable that he should not be roused until his recovery should be more perfected. On Lord Clifton's preparing, therefore, to return to his house in town, he refrained, at Mrs. Lavington's earnest request, from making Guy aware of his vicinity to him.

“Indeed, I hope your lordship will forgive my entreating you not to see him just yet,” said Mary, “as it is by Dr. H.’s express desire I do so. Guy has not the slightest idea that he has been ill above a day or two, and were he thus prematurely to discover the impracticability of his reaching Scotland in the time he wishes, the agitation might be fatal. He must suspect the real state of the case, if he found that your lordship had been sent for.”

“My dear madam,” returned the peer, “I am very far from wishing to see my nephew, since it is considered better not. I am satisfied to find him out of danger, poor fellow! I felt quite uneasy about him. I shall drive down in a day or two, before I leave town, and we must get him to Pevenley as soon as he can be moved. Only, I confess, I should like exceedingly to discover why he wants to go to Scotland just now?

Really I should have thought, since he *did* choose the law for a profession, that his studies would necessitate his remaining here. I can't understand it."

Lord Clifton, in Scottish phrase, required to have a thing "simmered and wintered" many times over to him ere he could take it in. This was by no means the first expression of his wonder to Mrs. Lavington since he had heard of his nephew's intended journey, as her present attempt to explain its motives was by no means the only one she had made. Whether or not it were equally fruitless with the former ones, she had little opportunity of judging, as his lordship very shortly after took leave; but the sagacious reader may form his own conclusions on the subject, from the circumstance that Lord Clifton's last ejaculation to himself, as his carriage rolled from the gate of Woodlawn, was—"Ah, hem! I should *very* much like to discover the real cause of Guy's wish to revisit Scotland!"

The pardonable, indeed necessary, artifice of his friends, succeeded in keeping Clifton ignorant of the length of time during which his illness had left him insensible to the passage of the numbered days of October. They could not, indeed, restrain his impatience at the slow progress of his recovery, or the intense anxiety that preyed upon his mind; but still his predominant hope, the only one which supported him, was that of being able to reach Scotland in time to see Alfred once more; and to this hope he continued to cling, though every passing day might have con-

vinced him of its fallacy. It was now a week since the fever had left him, and Dr. H. had at length acceded to his impatience so far as to permit him to quit his bed for the sofa in his dressing-room, during several hours in the afternoon. Here he was joined by Mr. Lavington, on his unusually early return from town one day.

"Alone, Clifton!" he said, as he entered.
"That is very unkind in Mary."

"She only left me five minutes ago," replied Clifton, smiling. "Whenever I begin talking to her, she quotes H., and tells me I must not speak so much, and at last she went away, because she says I will not obey her orders."

"Rather reversing the usual course of things," observed Mr. Lavington, "for a woman to hinder a man from talking. But I think you look better this afternoon, Clifton. How do you feel?"

"Oh, perfectly well!" replied Clifton. "I shall be able to travel in a few days, I am sure. Are there no letters for me to-day, Lavington?"

"None, my dear fellow. I sent to your rooms on purpose."

"Thank you, Lavington, I am extremely obliged to you. It is very strange. I must positively write one to-day. I—"

"Write a letter, Clifton! Pardon me, but it is entirely out of the question. You know H. forbade all mention of such a thing yesterday, and even took away that book of German hieroglyphics that he found lying on your table. You must not think of it."

"I must, Lavington," replied Clifton. "It can be delayed no longer. You need not betray me to H. It shall not be above a few lines—but write I must."

Mr. Lavington reiterated his remonstrances, but in vain, and was at length most reluctantly persuaded to place writing materials on the table beside Clifton, imploring him, however, not to write a long letter.

"I will not, I promise you," said Clifton. "You are a good fellow to give me my own way. Now don't betray me to Mary. Stay, Lavington," as that gentleman was leaving the room, "what day of the month is this?"

"Let me see," said Mr. Lavington, in the greatest trepidation, "I always forget the day of the month. It is—how confoundedly stupid!—I think—but I am not quite sure—that it is the 13th."

"How the time flies!" exclaimed Clifton, as Mr. Lavington escaped; and he addressed himself to his letter, feeling as he did so that he had never till then been sensible of his want of strength, for the exertion of sitting up, and the glare of the white paper before his eyes, were almost more than he could endure.

A few lines, however, he did contrive to write to Alfred explanatory of his situation, and expressing in some measure the feelings that filled his heart; but the faintness which he felt coming over him, and the pain in his forehead occasioned by stooping forward, obliged him to cut the

whole very short. After various pauses it was finished, sealed, and directed, and he sunk back on the sofa completely exhausted.

It might be about an hour after this that Clifton started from a sleep into which he had fallen. There was no one in the room with him, and he lay for a few minutes gazing on the reflection upon the wall opposite the window, which looked westward, of a long slanting red beam, indicative of sunset, and thinking of the beautiful autumn woods as they must be at that moment smiling beneath its ray, with all the intensity of longing which seizes on the worshipper of nature during the restraint and weariness of a sick room. The bright radiance grew the while less and less distinct, till it faded entirely from the wall. The sun had set, and Clifton turned away his eyes with a sigh. They rested on the fire-place, which was within a few paces of his sofa, between it and the door, and on its opposite side he started to perceive the figure of a man leaning against the mantel-piece, with his face partially turned from him. He had not heard the door open, but the lock, he remembered, was a very easy one, and, concluding that it was Lavington who had entered the room and remained silent, supposing him asleep, he addressed him by his name.

“I’ve kept my word, you see, Lavington,” said he. “It is long since my letter was finished.”

The person to whom he spoke turned fully round at these words, and looked towards him.

The room was by this time somewhat darkened, but at that moment the fire blazed up, throwing a bright illumination over every part of it, and disclosed to him a full and distinct view of the face and figure of this silent visitor. The face, the figure, the eyes, fixed upon him with a melancholy gaze, were those of Alfred Falconar!

Clifton sprang from the sofa as if touched by an electric shock. From the mingled effects of weakness and violent agitation he was unable for a minute to articulate a word, or to move a single step, and he remained supporting himself by the arm of the sofa, his eyes rivetted on the countenance of his friend—deadly pale and ghastly as it looked in the fitful light. Alfred, or his likeness, extended his right hand towards him, and his lips moved, but Clifton could not catch their sound. This motion, however, seemed to burst the spell that bound him.

“Falconar!” he exclaimed, advancing, as he spoke, with a faltering step.

The figure smiled, but he felt as if a dimness coming over his eyes rendered it less distinct to his view. It seemed to fade before him. Another step, he reached the spot. *There was no one there.* No one was in the apartment, and the door remained closed as it had been all the while.

Clifton paused for a moment. Every separate hair on his head seemed to erect itself—every pulse in his veins stood still one instant—then bounded, as though they would have burst. With the momentary strength of desperation, he

would have rushed to the door; but just then, some one knocked outside, then turned the handle, and he stood still, and caught at the back of a chair, to keep himself from falling. It opened, and Mr. Lavington appeared, ushering in Lord Clifton.

“Guy!” exclaimed the latter, in astonishment and alarm, on catching a glimpse of his nephew’s death-like countenance—“for Heaven’s sake, what is the matter?”

“Tell me—tell me!” exclaimed Clifton, struggling for utterance, “did you—did you meet any one on the stairs just now? Did any one come out of my room?”

“No one,” returned Lord Clifton, in added alarm; and—“Not a human being!” exclaimed Mr. Lavington.

“My dear boy,” said Lord Clifton, “sit down. What *is* the matter?”

“I am afraid you are worse, Clifton,” added Mr. Lavington. “Lean on me—you must not stand.”

“Tell me,” gasped Clifton, when Mr. Lavington had supported him to the sofa—“I conjure you, tell me, what day of the month is this?”

“This!—this is *the 24th*,” hastily answered Lord Clifton. “Why—”

“I knew it—I knew it!” exclaimed Clifton. He made an effort to raise himself, then fell back in a fainting-fit.

CHAPTER IX.

“Many have been, greatly beloved! thy days of trial sore—
Bereavement, grief, wanderings, and pain—but these shall soon
be o'er;

And loss, woe, weariness, all pain—each want, each earthly load,
Work the strange fiercely-linked chain, that leads man up to God.”

THOMAS AIRD, (*quoted from memory.*)

IT was about a fortnight previous to the event related in the last chapter, that the “City of Glasgow” steamer was discharging her passengers, one fine afternoon, at the pier of Rothesay. One of the first to step on shore was a gentleman, whose dress denoted the clerical profession, and who proceeded to make inquiries among the motley groups of idlers on the pier, concerning a house, to which he seemed to want a direction.

“What's yer wull, sir?” demanded a jolly-looking dame, begirt with children, who were trooping at her heels, and hanging on the skirts of her gown, as she tendered, to the acceptance of any one who would purchase, a basket of gin-

gerbread, *quality-cakes*, and rosy-cheeked apples.
“ Wha’ was’t ye was speerin’ for?”

“ A house in the East Bay,” returned the stranger, “ belonging to somebody of the name of MacCuaig, I think; but where a lady, named Mrs. Falconar, lives at present. Can you tell me the way to it?”

“ Atweel, sir, that can I e’en. Davie, ye muckle loon,” addressing a chubby urchin of some ten years old or thereabouts—“ gang awa’ wi’ the gentleman, an’ let him see the gait till Mistress MacCuaig’s—that’s a braw callant.”

“ Ay, do, Davie,” said the stranger, “ for I’m rather in a hurry. Come along, and I’ll give you sixpence.”

“ Hoo’s a’ wi’ ye, minister?” exclaimed a decent-looking countryman, coming up at the moment when Davie was about relinquishing his game of *bools* for the lucre of gain to be won by guiding the gentleman.

“ Ah, Saunders!” replied the latter, “ who would have thought of seeing you here?”

“ Troth, minister, I e’en cam’ up yestreen, to see my dochter, Jean—her that’s married upon lang Tam Wallace, ye ken. An’ ye’ll be takin’ yer pleeshur, I’se warrant?”

“ Not much of that, Saunders,” returned the minister, with a sigh; “ I made a run up to see a dear young friend of mine, who, I have learned, is ill here.”

“ Ay, ay! Hech, hech, sirs, this is an unco’ warld, minister! Is the puir lad dangerous?”

“ I fear, he is very seriously ill, Saunders;

but good-day, I have little time to lose. We shall meet on the Sabbath-day, I fancy?"

"Nae doot o' that, sir, gin' it be the Lord's wull. Gude-day t'ye."

The minister and his elder shook hands; and the former directed his steps towards the East Bay, while Davie trotted on before.

"Ye'll pree my gingebread, gudeman?" asked the mother of the above-mentioned youth, in a dulcet tone of invitation, as she held out the basket to our friend Saunders.

"Hoots, gae wa', woman!" was the unsatisfactory reply, accompanied by a gesture of repulse.

"E'en's ye like," retorted the indignant vender of sweets; "ye'll no get better quality-cakes, or bonnier Ribstane pippins, in a' Rothesay."

Saunders vouchsafed a glance towards the basket. "The weans, puir things, wad maybe be fain o' them," he remarked, in an under voice, and he stopped to inspect and cheapen the goods.

"An' wha's yon?" inquired the matron, glancing after the retreating figure of the clergyman, as the bargain was about being concluded.

"What for d'ye want to ken?" responded Saunders, *more Scoticó*.

"A body may speir a name, surely, and no muckle ill dune," rejoined the dame, tossing her head.

"I'm sure it's nouther beef nor brose o' yours, Lucky, but a name's soon tauld. Yon's Maister Dalzell, the minister o' Kirkstonholm, doon yont

by Ayr. Ye'll gie me thir aipples for tippence, nae doot?"

"Fient a bodle less nor tippence-happney, gudeman," was the determined reply.

"Aweel, aweel," returned Saunders, in a tone of resignation. "Hae, there it's. An extortionfu' wife!" he ejaculated to himself, as he moved off, pocketing his bargain.

"A dour auld cankered carle!" muttered his antagonist, and she, too, proceeded onwards, followed by her progeny, to find further purchasers amongst the newly-arrived Glaswegians.

Mr. Dalzell, the tutor of Alfred Falconar, had now been for some years established in a country parish, where his Christian virtues and excellent disposition rendered him no less valuable to the community than he had proved himself, on a narrower scale, in the family at Cargarth. Fondly attached to all his pupils, he had always entertained a more especial affection for Alfred, and regarded his brilliant talents with the pride natural to one who had been so largely instrumental in their development. Their opportunities of meeting had latterly been few, but a constant intercourse by letter had subsisted between them; he had, therefore, been aware of the ill health of his young friend, but without the slightest suspicion of the case being a hopeless one, and the surprise and shock were equally great, when on his recent return to Kirkstonholm, after the most unusual circumstance of some weeks' absence on pressing business, he found a letter awaiting him

from Alfred, informing him of his own anticipations, and earnestly requesting to see him once more. He had as speedily as possible obeyed the summons, and now found himself before the garden-gate of the small, but comfortable-looking house, occupied by Mrs. Falconar. This garden-gate, just as his guide, Davie, galloped off with his promised reward, was opened by a beautiful girl, whose lovely Hebe face was shaded by a large cottage bonnet, from under which her long ringlets of sunny hair escaped in rich masses, hanging down even to her shoulders. She looked earnestly at the stranger for a moment, then held out her hand.

“Have you forgotten me, Mr. Dalzell?” asked she, and as she spoke, a smile, bright and guileless as that of childhood itself, and but little, if at all, altered in its expression since her childish days, rendered the recognition of Clara an easier matter to her old friend, than it had been at the first aspect of her altered and embellished person.

“Ah, my dear little Clara!—*Miss* Clara as, I suppose, I must call you now,” exclaimed he; “how do you do?”

“You are not to call me *Miss* Clara on any account, Mr. Dalzell,” said she. “I am very sorry mamma is not at home, but Alfred will be so glad you are come. He has been longing to see you.”

“And how is he?” eagerly inquired Mr. Dalzell.

“He has been very, very ill,” replied Clara.

“ You will think him sadly altered, I fear ; but he is better—I think he looks a great deal better to-day. Dr. I——, our Edinburgh physician, came out last week to see him, and he and the medical man here think he ought to remain all winter in Bute ; they consider the air of Edinburgh too keen for him just now. I hope a winter here will quite set him up. They say that autumn is such a trying season, he cannot expect to feel so well at present.”

“ And do you all remain here ?” asked Mr. Dalzell, “ during the winter ?”

“ No, on account of Harry, we can’t. Poor dear little fellow ! in the hurry and distress of our being summoned here from Wellwood Castle, when Alfred was so very alarmingly ill, mamma left Harry there, at my uncle’s request, and he brought him to town when the academy opened ; and oh ! Mr. Dalzell, only fancy where he is staying just now !—with Aunt Annie !”

Mr. Dalzell, who had by no means forgotten Aunt Annie’s domiciliary visits, in days of yore, could not restrain a smile. “ Poor Hal !” said he, “ I dare say he doesn’t much like his quarters.”

“ Like them !” exclaimed Clara ; “ you know that is quite impossible. He wrote to me the other day (he has just been a week there), that if it were not for Martha, who is very kind to him, he doesn’t know what he would do. However, Alfred has such a wish to see him, he has been entreating mamma so earnestly to let him come, that the doctor says she must not refuse him,

So having some business to settle in Edinburgh at any rate, she went away two days ago, and will be back by the end of the week with Harry. As soon as she sees Alfred a little stronger, (he really is so much better this last week!) she means to take us to Edinburgh, and leave Ellen here with him. She will come and go during the winter; we have all been imploring her to let me stay, and she wont, which is very hard. But don't let me keep you standing, Mr. Dalzell; I'll go in with you, and perhaps Ellen will take a walk with me, now you are come. Alfred is always so anxious that we should take exercise, that we walk to please him, but we can't both leave him at once."

Clara conducted Mr. Dalzell up stairs, to a light and cheerful sitting-room. A sofa was drawn near to one of the windows, and on it, supported by pillows, Alfred was reclining, whilst Eleanor sat beside him, with a book in her hand, which she appeared to have been reading aloud. Mr. Dalzell's anxious eye perceived in an instant that the pale and melancholy face of the elder sister, as she started up to receive him, offered no confirmation to the cheerful anticipations of the younger. He turned to Alfred, and one glance at him, as he affectionately grasped his hand, told him the truth. There was an expression in his beautiful countenance—a light in his eye—which at once brought conviction to the heart of one who had sat by many a death-bed, that they were the emanations of a spirit soon about to quit this world. It was not the alteration in his form, for

Mr. Dalzell had seen many far more emaciated and wasted by sickness, who yet wore no such look as that which now struck him. The hand of the Angel of Death marks its intended victims with a seal unlike any other.

After some general conversation, Eleanor acceded to the entreaty of her sister and brother, and consented to go out for a short walk with Clara.

“Be so kind, my dear girls, as to call at the Post Office before your return,” said Alfred, as they were leaving the room. “I cannot imagine why I have no letters from England.”

“Jean sent one of the maids there an hour ago, Alfred,” replied Eleanor, stifling a sigh, “and there were none.”

“Ah, well, that will do. It is very, very strange,” added Alfred, in a low voice, as his sisters closed the door. “My dear sir, will you sit down by me here? I have a great deal to say to you. . . .

“And you believe as I do that it was a warning from Heaven?” asked Alfred, after a conversation of some length, on subjects with which the reader is already acquainted.

“I dare not presume to assert the contrary,” replied Mr. Dalzell, in a solemn tone. “These things are wrapt in mystery, but we have the highest authority for believing that God may speak to man ‘in a dream—in a vision of the night.’ Yet, my dear, dear boy—my dear young friend, it grieves my very heart to see you thus prepared to anticipate death in the morning

of your life." The worthy man paused abruptly, his voice faltering with emotion.

"I should have thought," returned Alfred, with a melancholy smile, "that you would not have considered early death as an evil."

"No, no, Alfred; but there are human feelings —there are those in this world on whom our human pride and affections fix, as destined, in our opinion, to perform a distinguished part in life. God has many uses for his creatures, and I, in my blindness, had looked forward to a long life of usefulness and of happiness for you. I—I—I am ashamed of my own weakness, Alfred; as a minister of religion, it is I who ought to strengthen you, and——"

"And so you would," exclaimed Alfred, "were it yourself for whom you anticipated death. But our warm human affections cling so closely round our hearts. There are some partings—some—of which it is hard to think."

There was a pause of several minutes, which was broken by Mr. Dalzell.

"My dear young friend," said he, "for dear to me you have been as a son of my own, it was I who, under Divine Grace, first became the humble instrument of leading your heart to God. It is my solemn duty to ask you now, at this solemn hour, if you feel prepared to meet him in judgment?—prepared in the only way through which sinful man may dare approach his Creator?"

"It is a solemn question," replied Alfred. "But I believe I may answer it, though with dread and humility, yet with hope. Not in my

own strength, but in a better faith than human works, I can say that I trust I am prepared."

"Thank God for that!" fervently exclaimed Mr. Dalzell. "Oh, how could anything but the most fearful blindness support a dying man to approach his Maker on the plea of any works of his own?"

"Those who believe that such a support will avail a dying man," returned Alfred, "know little of what it is to die. Do you remember those lines of an old poetical favourite of ours?

'What to thy soul its glad assurance gave
Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave?
The sweet remembrance of unblemish'd youth,
The still inspiring voice of innocence and truth.'

Little did he know of the subject who could say so! Such remembrances belong to no human heart!"

"Not to a single son of all the race of Adam," replied Mr. Dalzell. "These lines are as false as they are beautiful. Which of us dare approach a God of purity at the close of the shortest and best-spent life, and talk of resting our grounds of acceptance with him on the score of an unblemished youth?"

"Rather we have cause," said Alfred, "weighty cause, to humble our hearts in the dust on account of the sins of our youth, for oh! how they stand arrayed before our eyes on a death-bed! I have sometimes, Mr. Dalzell, felt a rebellious murmur arise in my heart at the thought of quitting life so soon, but when I think of this, think of the countless temptations that beset our paths

in youth, the worldliness which steals over advancing manhood, the hard mocking spirit that is abroad in the world, the frequency with which men learn to blush for their best feelings, and to deny their holiest faith from the fear of ridicule, then, indeed, I bless God that I have been permitted to withdraw from the conflict so soon!"

"And you may bless him, my dear Alfred!" exclaimed Mr. Dalzell, turning aside his head to hide his glistening eyes—"you may bless him, for to every Christian it is, and must be, a sharp conflict, and one wherein his own earthly nature, and his senses, are his worst enemies."

"A death-bed," said Alfred, "is the true disenchanter of existence. We never learn till we are forced to do so there how worthless are the objects most eagerly coveted in life."

Mr. Dalzell took up some of the books which lay on the table beside Alfred's sofa; there were a volume of Wordsworth, one of Milton, another of Southey, and that which Eleanor had just been reading to him, Archbishop Leighton.

"You see," said Alfred, "I have some of our old friends there. These are all precious companions to a dying man. My sisters often read to me, dear girls! I can hardly read much now myself. And even when I have not strength for that, I have that beautiful prospect to look at," pointing to the window. "I never remain in bed when I can summon strength to sit up. Thank Heaven! I suffer no pain, and a sick room always appears to me a contracted thing. The

face of nature, and the glorious sky, are the fittest objects to attract our last looks on earth."

"They are," replied Mr. Dalzell, "for even in health their influence has often been the means of drawing our hearts *hither*." He placed his hand on a Bible which lay upon the table.

"Ah!" said Alfred, "none but the dying can tell the unutterable value of that holy book. It is like the diamond, emitting brighter rays, as all around it grows dim and dark."

"Alfred," asked Mr. Dalzell, after a pause—"your sisters—are they—are they aware——"

"Clara," said Alfred, in a low and agitated voice, "has not the remotest idea that I am dying. She is a creature of hope and happiness. She never dreams of sorrow. Dear child, she must soon learn the lesson of mortality! But Eleanor—Eleanor has been the companion of all my life long, and I—I never had a secret from her till now. I think—I am sure she sees that I have no hope of recovery, but I never could bear to tell her the whole. She must learn it soon. God knows how she will bear it!"

"God *does* know, Alfred," returned his friend. "He knows, and he will enable her to bear it. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'"

Mr. Dalzell remained all that evening with his beloved pupils, and ere he left them, he performed family worship with them, as he had often before done. When Eleanor knelt down beside her sister, and heard the old familiar voice of other times uttering the evening prayer, there came over her

heart a choking recollection of the old library at Cargarth, where the same group, and *others*—and in circumstances how widely different!—had been used to assemble for the same purpose. But she felt that this was not a time for the indulgence of enervating sorrow. A dark and terrible trial lay before her, day by day shadowed out to her anticipations with more fearful distinctness; she had need to pray, and she pressed her hands against her eyes to stay the tears which were bursting from them, and raised her heart to the Hearer and the Answerer of Prayer.

Parish business of a very pressing nature obliged Mr. Dalzell to quit Rothesay on the following day, though painfully against his wishes. The hour when the steamer started was early in the forenoon, and Alfred had not quitted his bed when his friend came to bid him farewell. Mr. Dalzell remained for a considerable time alone with him, and when at length he entered the parlour, and bade a kind, almost a parental farewell to Eleanor and Clara, the former did not fail to remark that his eyes bore evident traces of weeping, and that his whole demeanour was that of one who is ineffectually labouring to subdue or conceal violent agitation. He went, and Clara repaired to her brother's apartment to sit by him, leaving her sister alone.

Eleanor no sooner found herself released from observation than the agonizing feelings which were swelling in her heart burst forth from the constraint imposed upon them. The pen with which she had been engaged in casting up house-

hold bills dropped from her hand. She flung her arms over the back of her chair, and hiding her face in them, wept long and bitterly. There are few more dreadful feelings than those which wring the heart with apprehensions for the life of a beloved object—apprehensions which it would kill one to utter, and yet which lie unuttered like a weight of burning lead within the breast. Eleanor had hoped on, clung to hope, and refused to part with it to the very last. The bare idea of losing Alfred was one so fraught with agony as to seem incredible and inadmissible; and, oh, the bitter, bitter pain of finding such an idea forcing itself on and on, compelling the heart in its own despite to receive it, staring us in the face at last with dark and awful conviction! She could not be blind to the diminution in her brother's strength; she could not shut her ears to the tone in which the medical man day by day repeated his few injunctions, that his patient should "keep quiet, guard against cold, and take anything he liked;" nor could she disguise from herself the sadness with which her brother's eye would fix at times upon herself and Clara, or the deeper and more melancholy meaning that seemed to mingle in their parting kisses at night, and in those with which they met again in the morning. There were times when even Clara's sanguine heart seemed sinking under similar feelings, and yet the sisters mutually shrank from giving their fears the apparent confirmation of expressing them to each other. It is a luxury in such a case even to weep alone

and unnoticed, but such tears bring little relief. Alas! and yet we live to look back with a mournful longing on the time when our sorrows *could* dissolve in tears!

At length, Mrs. Falconar and Harry arrived, an event to which Alfred had looked forward with an anxiety which increased tenfold the weight on Eleanor's heart. Nothing, she felt, but a sensation of hopeless illness could have produced it, for her mother's presence was by no means conducive to the repose of an invalid. She watched with intense interest the expression of her mother's face on first seeing Alfred after her absence, feeling herself that, even in that short space of time, he was much changed, but was unable to detect in it any reflection of the fears that distracted herself. Mrs. Falconar did, indeed, look alarmed and anxious for a few minutes, and exclaimed, "My dear Alfred, I don't think you look so well as you did when I went away!" but her mind seemed speedily tranquillized, and she entered into conversation respecting home news, as though nothing particular were the matter. Egotists always are blind to what is passing with others, in exact proportion to the keenness of their sight towards all that concerns themselves.

Eleanor was much struck by an observation of Harry's, whose delight at seeing his brother and sisters again, not to mention his escaping from lesson-books and Aunt Annie, was very great, but whose eyes she perceived constantly fixed upon Alfred's countenance during the first even-

ing; and at night she overheard him whisper to Clara in the passage, on his way to bed, "Clara, do you know it is very odd, whenever I looked at Alfred to-night, I thought of papa—he is grown so like him."

"Alfred was always like poor papa!" said Clara, with a sigh.

"Ah! but," returned Harry, earnestly, "not in the same way, somehow."

Eleanor remembered Sir Thomas Brown's observation, that the countenance of a dying man generally assumes an expression less like his own than that of some of his nearest relations, an observation illustrated by the instance of his friend, whose face, before his death, became so like his uncle's, dead some years previously. It scarce needed this reflection to add bitterness to her sorrow. Others, more fortunate, might have found consolation, even for such pangs as this, in the presence and the kindness of a mother; but such was not her case. Mrs. Falconar was none of those mothers whose bosoms afford a refuge for their children in the day of calamity. Egotistical, self-engrossed, and yet destitute of moral strength, she required support, and gave none.

A day or two after his mother's arrival, Alfred became considerably worse. The slightest exertion, even of being moved from his bed to a sofa, was followed by long and death-like fainting-fits; and so great was his weakness, that at times he was unable to speak, even in a whisper. Yet the same unalterable patience and gentleness which had marked the whole course of his illness,

continued to diffuse around his death-bed that holy calm, which stills the agony of those whose lot it is to attend upon a beloved sufferer, into resignation and composure.

This, however, was not the closing scene. Once more he rallied, to a degree totally unexpected, so much so as to be able to resume his place in the sitting-room for an hour or two in the day. Here it was that, one afternoon, having prevailed upon Eleanor, who had scarce left him day or night, to go out for a little while, by the affectionate entreaties which it was impossible for her to resist, Alfred was left alone with Clara and Harry for a considerable time, his mother being in her own apartment. Mrs. Falconar, at last, entering the room, was met at the door by Harry, who rushed past her, sobbing as if his heart would burst, down stairs, and into the garden behind the house. Clara was kneeling by her brother's sofa, her face hid in her hands, whilst his arm encircled her neck, her bosom heaving, and her golden ringlets literally drenched in tears. She, too, started up on her mother's entrance, and left the room. Alfred sank back on the sofa, and covered his face with his hands, and there was unbroken silence for some minutes.

“Mother,” said he, at length, “I have something I want to say to you. There is a great favour that I have to ask. You will not refuse it, will you?”

“My dear boy,” she replied, as he pressed her hand, which he had taken, “I am sure I am not

apt to refuse what any of you ask, unless it be very unreasonable indeed."

"This," returned Alfred, "is what you were once persuaded into thinking unreasonable, but I trust it will now be otherwise with you; and, oh! my dearest mother, I wish I had time or strength to implore you, for your children's sake, henceforward to think more for yourself, and to trust more than you have done to their affection! But I weary you, and I have not strength to talk. Promise me, I beseech of you, mother, for my sake—promise me that you will allow my poor Eleanor to correspond with Guy Clifton."

"Alfred, Alfred!—how can I?" began Mrs. Falconar, in a hesitating voice. He hastened to interrupt her.

"Mother, it is the only favour—the *last*—I shall ever ask!"

"My dear boy!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "What do you mean, for Heaven's sake? Do you feel worse! I must send off directly for the doctor!"

"No, no, my dear mother, I do not need him," said Alfred. "I am not worse; but, mother, my hours are numbered—I am dying! Do not weep for me—I am happy. If I can but be of this last service to those I love best on earth, I shall die in peace. Grant me this request, mother!"

"My beloved Alfred," exclaimed Mrs. Falconar, in an agony of tears, "do not talk so—it would kill me to lose you! Yes, yes;—they

may correspond, if he will only continue steady in his profession. But do not talk of dying, Alfred."

"Thank you! thank you!" he exclaimed, pressing her hand to his lips. "Do not weep so bitterly, mother; I am going where there are no more tears! For my sake, love and cherish those who will be left behind. And oh, my own, dear mother, forgive me if at any time I have displeased you! I never did so willingly. But we have all many faults towards each other to answer for,—and I have some, doubtless, towards you. Think of me only as a son who dearly loved you, and wished to fulfil his duty."

Mrs. Falconar could not answer; she abandoned herself to her grief, and wept unrestrainedly.

CHAPTER X.

“ Und jetzt zum letzten Lebewohl.”—SCHILLER.

It had latterly been the custom of the sisters to divide the duty of watching by their brother through the night, except when he had been so ill as to render it impossible either for their mother or them to leave him. The faithful nurse, who has been formerly mentioned, had been an invaluable and unwearied attendant upon Alfred from the beginning of his illness, and, when he was tolerably easy at night, they always insisted on her lying down on a little bed in a room next his, whence she could be instantly summoned when required. On the evening of the day when Alfred's conversation with his mother took place, he had been so much exhausted as to fall into a profound sleep unusually early, and Clara, to whom Eleanor assigned the least fatiguing duty of sitting by him the first part of the night, took her post in his room. Harry had retired to bed, and sobbed himself to sleep; and Mrs. Falconar, worn out by weeping,

withdrew very soon after him. Eleanor was left alone in the sitting-room—to attempt going to bed, or sleeping, she felt impossible. In all the agonizing restlessness of a troubled spirit, she could compose herself to no occupation,—and to read, especially, was out of her power; after several ineffectual attempts, she desisted. She durst not join Clara, from the fear of disturbing Alfred's sleep; and, at length, approaching the window, which was his favourite seat, she flung up the sash and sat down by it, feeling refreshed by the mild, though damp, night air.

There was no moon; but the sky, though generally cloudy, disclosed in many places dim, blue glimpses of the purer ether, whence the stars beamed faintly out. The town lay hushed in dim and shadowy indistinctness beneath, while, further on, a gentle murmur broke upon the ear—low, monotonous, and unceasing, and mingling soothingly with the silence, from where the sea, scarce distinguishable in the darkness, was flowing in upon the shore. There was a calm in the hour and the scene, such as presses painfully on a heart aching beneath the misery of suspense, and so Eleanor felt as she leant her head upon her hand, and looked up to the sky, while, gradually, one tear after another rolled over her cheek, and one melancholy thought after another rolled in like manner over her memory. She thought of Clifton—for the morrow was the *24th of October*. “Oh, that he were but here!” she said to herself. And then again arose the thought—ever banished, yet ever recurring,—“Why—

why has he never written in all this long, weary time?" The fact of such neglect being totally unlike him, only rendered this thought more distressing; for what but some reason of the most painful and engrossing nature could have prevented his writing at such a period? She strove to force her mind from this idea, sad aggravation as it was of her suspense and sorrow, but there were none of a more cheerful character to supply its place. Then came recollections of her father, of Cargarth, of Alfred in his days of health and strength. The unforgotten conversation with him—recorded, in a former chapter, as having taken place on that very spot,—returned upon her heart again, and she recognised in full its then unperceived meaning. "Oh, our Father in heaven!" she exclaimed, bending her head upon her hands, and pressing her breast against the window-sill, to stifle her sobs, "grant me strength and grace to bear this fearful trial!" She raised her eyes after some minutes, and, in the dusk, she fancied that she beheld the face of her father, looking at her from out the furthest corner of the dimly-lighted room. It was but for an instant,—but the delusion of an excited imagination; yet a sensation of indescribable terror darted through her. She started from her seat, and hastily closing the window, caught up her candle, and hurried from the apartment without again venturing to glance behind her.

On reaching the door of her brother's apartment, Eleanor heard the murmur of a voice within, and entering, found that Alfred was

awake, and Clara reading to him from the Book of Psalms. She silently seated herself beside her sister, and when, some time after, Clara ceased reading, thinking that Alfred looked exhausted, they both joined in entreating her to go to bed. Poor Clara, whose bright blue eyes were dim and swollen with tears, and whose whole demeanour was that of one overwhelmed by the pressure of some new and unexpected sorrow, at length consented, and tenderly kissing her brother, and clasping her arms with a half-stifled sob round the neck of her sister, as she bade her good-night, she left the room.

Alfred had sunk asleep with Eleanor's hand clasped in his, as she sat on a chair close beside his bed, and thus they both remained for about half an hour, when he awoke with a start, and seemed disinclined to sleep again.

"I have been dreaming of Cargarth, Ellen," said he. "Mr. Dalzell's visit has recalled so many old thoughts to my mind, of our happy days long ago! Do you remember our summer rambles over the hills with him?"

Eleanor repressed the tears which were struggling to make their way, and answered him at first with assumed composure; which, however, as one reminiscence led on another, gradually assumed the form of mournful, yet withal, pleasing calmness,—and the brother and sister were at length engaged in a review of their early years of happiness, in a recalling of all their old innocent pleasures, with a strange sort of dreamy stillness mingling in their feelings,

and lulling their hearts into a temporary oblivion that one was on his death-bed, and the other awaiting the fiat which should sever the silver cord bound about her heart from infancy. It is often thus with the soul of the dying ; pausing on the verge of its last flight, it directs a backward glance over the first and brightest part of its course through life,—even as the features of the dead, when the last struggle is over, frequently become composed to the expression which they wore in early youth, ere time had stamped them with the signet of care and sorrow.

Eleanor at first made more than one effort to restrain Alfred from talking, fearing he might become exhausted, but, at length, yielding to her own wishes as well as his, she ceased to do so, and suffered herself to be borne along with him on the tide of early recollections. They talked of their father more than any one else, and gradually, from retracing their early life, their conversation took a sadder turn, until it came to dwell on the events of later years.

“ Oh, Ellen !” said Alfred, “ I feel now that I have deeply erred in the proud and rebellious spirit in which I met the trials it pleased God to inflict upon us. I see things in such a different light, now that the illusions of life exist for me no longer.”

“ Do not say so, Alfred !” exclaimed Eleanor. “ Few have borne more than you have done, or borne it more nobly.”

“ The eye of man, dearest,” returned Alfred, “ may have seen it thus, but I have much to

answer for between God and my own heart. I did not view worldly trials as I should have done, as instruments in a father's hand for working out his own wise and gracious purposes. Every event of human life, Ellen, is, as our old friend Bishop Butler observes, but one portion of a mighty scheme, complete in all its parts, and no one link in the chain could have subsisted without its antecedent link. We shall one day be able to scan it in all its parts, though here we can only see it 'through a glass darkly!' But the clouds begin to roll off our mental horizon, as we approach the goal of our race, and then we perceive the necessity of what once seemed mysterious and inexplicable."

Eleanor stooped forward till her face was hid in one of the pillows, which, in a few minutes, was wet with her silent tears. She could not speak. After a short pause, Alfred went on.

"I wish," said he, with a sigh—"I wish I had heard from Clifton. Some weighty reason for his silence there must be. I would it had pleased God that I might have bid him a last farewell. Ellen, dearest, my mother has promised me to sanction your correspondence, which is a great comfort to me at this time. You will find a letter for him in my writing-case, of which you have the key, and which I wish you to open immediately. And you will open the next letter that comes from him. Oh, my own Ellen! your lot—the lot of you all—is in the hands of a Father who doth not afflict willingly, and yet my weak heart would shrink even more than it does, at the thought of

those trials which may await you, did I not feel sure that even in this world you will yet be happy; as the wife of Clifton——”

Alfred was interrupted by a cry which burst from the lips of his sister. She could no longer command herself; she clasped her arms around his neck, sobbing as if her heart would break. “Alfred! Alfred!” were the only words she could utter. Prepare ourselves as we will, the certainty of such a blow falls fearfully upon the heart at last.

“Oh, Ellen!” exclaimed Alfred, “I need hide the truth no longer.” And in few and interrupted words he related to her the dream which had warned him of death. He finished, but Eleanor could not reply. She could only clasp her hands in utter agony, and press them tightly against her bursting heart, and gasp out the words—“No, no, no—it cannot be! No, no, Alfred! Oh, my God! have mercy!”

“Yes, Ellen, yes, my own darling sister—my sweet companion, we must part!” said Alfred. “Oh, it is a bitter thing to part with you! We have been—we have been so happy together!” His voice faltered, he clasped his arms round his sister, as she clung to him, and they mingled their tears together.

For more than an hour they remained thus, locked in each other’s arms—all thoughts, all feelings, merged in the one overpowering agony of separation. And surely Heaven itself would look with compassion on the mournful farewell of love like theirs. At last, the pale grey beams of the

autumnal dawn began to shine through the crevices of the window-shutters. It grew brighter and brighter. Alfred raised his head from the shoulder of Eleanor, and begged her to open the shutters, and draw back the window curtains. She did so in silence, then returned again to his side.

“Eleanor, love,” whispered he, “the day is breaking. We have often prayed together in the morning, and surely we never had more need of prayer. Let us do so once more.”

Eleanor did not trust her voice with a reply, but making a strong effort to smother her sobs, she brought the Bible, and kneeling down by the bed, read, with a faltering voice, but gaining strength and firmness as she proceeded, the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of St. John—those precious chapters which have comforted many a mourner. Then, with a heart inspired, as it were, by the hope which is not of this world, she uttered an unpremeditated prayer, which brought to the aching and troubled breast, even amid the agony of shrinking nature, that calmness which no earthly power could have bestowed.

The faint voice of Alfred joined in her utterance of the Lord’s Prayer, with which her petition closed. She remained long on her knees in silent devotion, her face hid in her hands, and on looking up, perceived that her brother had fallen asleep. Rising very softly, she withdrew to the window, and seated herself there. The room was at the back of the house, and looking towards

the east, and she sat till the broad autumn sun rose slowly in the sky. How often, in her after-life, did she look back upon that sunrise ! The peacefulness of the scene—the rich landscape on which those pure and glorious beams were falling —the robins twittering and singing in the little garden beneath the window, where a few lingering flowers yet remained—the quiet, hushed chamber within, with its closely curtained bed—each and all such a bitter contrast to the aching, bursting heart—to the dreary feeling of hopelessness—the sickening anticipation of all the misery which that opening day might bring. She sat as if chained to the spot, how long she could not tell, till casting her eyes on the dressing-table, she perceived her brother's watch lying upon it, and mechanically took it up. *It had stopped!* The hand stood still at five o'clock. Eleanor looked at it for a moment in silence, then hastily, though quietly, putting it down again, she stole from the room, ran along the passage to the empty parlour, and threw herself upon a chair in a passion of tears.

She wept until she felt as if she could weep no more. At last, her tears exhausted themselves, and she rose, intending to send old Jean into her brother's room, that she herself might efface from her disordered dress and hair, and her swollen eyes, the tokens of her sleepless night. At that moment, the old woman entered the parlour, and started to perceive her there, and looking as she did.

“ My dear bairn !” she exclaimed. “ Gude be about us !—what ails ye ?”

“ Nothing, Jean,” hastily answered Eleanor, biting her quivering lip. “ Will you go and sit by Mr. Falconar ? I should like to dress.”

The old woman advanced, and looked earnestly at her, then patted her gently on the shoulder—“ My dawty !” said she, “ life and death are in the Lor’s hands.”

She left the room, and Eleanor pressed her hands against her burning eyes, and made a desperate resolution to weep no more, for she felt that this was not a time for yielding to her sorrow.

The forenoon hours passed heavily on. Scarce a word was spoken amongst the assembled family. The medical man arrived at his usual time, but finding that his patient was asleep, would not disturb him, and withdrew, saying that he should return some time in the evening.

“ Will you ?” eagerly asked Eleanor.

“ Yes, Miss Falconar,” was the reply. “ You may depend upon me to-night, though it may be near seven o’clock ; for I’ve a visit to pay, a good way off, this afternoon.”

We have all felt what it is to catch at a look, a word, for hope, when some dreaded calamity is hanging over us : we are so apt to believe what we wish. It will not, therefore, be matter of wonder, that poor Eleanor felt her heart lightened, in spite of herself, by these few words, for they seemed to imply no apprehension of immediate danger to her brother.

Alfred awoke from this sleep with a singular feeling of renovated strength; so much so, as to be able to dress, and to walk into the sitting-room, with no other support than the arm of Eleanor; while the deep glow upon his cheek, and the extraordinary lustre of his eyes, almost recalled what he had been in the days of health and vigour.

“Why, dearest Alfred,” exclaimed Clara, as he entered, her buoyant spirit rising with the least shadow of hope—“how very much better you look!”

“Do you think so, dearest?” said her brother, kissing her, as she arranged the pillows of his sofa.

“Yes, my dear boy; I really think you look much better, and seem stronger,” observed Mrs. Falconar; “but you must not stay here too long, for fear of fatigue.”

“Only till I have seen the sun set,” replied Alfred. “It will not be long till then, mother, and I never like to leave this window till I have seen it.”

Clara now left the room, to gather some of the autumnal flowers in the garden, for her brother. Eleanor was sitting silently beside Alfred, and Mrs. Falconar near the fire. Harry had crept close to his brother, who lay with one arm round him, as he stood by the sofa. “Has any one,” suddenly inquired Alfred, “been at the post-office to-day?”

“I rather think not,” returned Mrs. Falconar. “I forgot to send.”

"I'll go, Alfred," said Harry.

"Do so, my dear fellow," replied Alfred; "go now, and make haste back."

Clara returned, bringing with her a little bouquet of primroses, and other late flowers, for which refreshing gift she received the tender thanks of Alfred, beside whom and Eleanor she then seated herself. Harry very speedily made his appearance from the post-office, but brought no letters with him.

"No letters!" said Alfred, in a low voice. "I wish—Oh, how I wish I could have seen him! Eleanor, dearest, tell him so; tell him, it was my last wish, that I might have bid him farewell."

This was uttered in a whisper, so low, that Eleanor could hardly catch the words. She bent her head to hear them; then, struggling with the tears which she was determined not to shed, implored him to return to his room.

"Not yet, love," he answered; "I should like to see the sun set before I go."

There was a silence for some time. Alfred sank into a species of slumber, and no one uttered a word. At last, he raised his head, and pressed Eleanor's hand. Her eyes were fixed on his, and followed the direction they took; it was towards the window—towards the bright red sun, which was sinking, beneath a canopy of purple and gold clouds, behind the opposite mountains of Argyllshire. The last portion of his broad disc had disappeared for a few seconds, when again she felt her hand convulsively pressed; and

Clara, at the same moment, started with a faint shriek from her chair; in the next, both sisters were on their knees, by their dying brother. Again Alfred pressed Eleanor's hand between both his, made an effort to raise them, as if in prayer; then she felt them grow stiff and cold—the grasp relaxed—there was a slight convulsive shudder—a rattling in the throat—his eye fixed—and all was over.

Some hours had passed away; the tears and hysterical agony of the bereaved mother had exhausted themselves, and she had fallen into a heavy sleep. Clara and Harry had clung to their sister, and wept and sobbed, in all the overwhelming fulness of youthful affliction, till they had been tenderly persuaded by Eleanor to retire to bed. Clara did at length cry herself to sleep; and her sister, who had remained beside her, then arose, and left the room. It was now somewhat late, and she was the only person astir in the house.

Eleanor, her heart crushed—dead, as it were, beneath the untold weight of sorrow—had not yet shed a single tear. There had been tears, and shrieks, and distraction all around her; and she, the greatest sufferer, had been the only one capable of a thought for others. But He who lays such trials upon His creatures, imparts a strength to bear them, which, in looking back upon such times, appears miraculous. She had been enabled to support herself, to retain her senses, to administer comfort to all—such comfort as could be administered; but throughout

the whole, she felt like one walking and speaking in her sleep. She had not opened her eyes to the full consciousness of her misery.

Now she was, for the first time, alone ; she entered the parlour, and, closing the door, placed her candle upon a table, and walked towards the window. The sofa stood as it had done when her brother died ; the chairs remained where she and Clara had placed them, by his side. She sat down upon the one which had been her seat then, pressed her hands wildly on her burning forehead, and flung herself forward upon the pillows ; her heart heaved and swelled, as if it had been bursting ; she would have given worlds for the power of weeping, or even for that of venting in shrieks the wretchedness, which felt as if it would turn her brain ; but her tears and her voice seemed alike dried up and stifled. Raising her head in her agony, her eye caught something lying upon the sofa, and she took it up : it was Clara's little nosegay of faded primroses. Eleanor looked at it, and the well-known flowers recalled the happy evening of that day twelvemonth ; they unlocked the fountains of her desolate heart —she pressed them to her lips, and burst into tears.

She wept, almost without intermission, for more than an hour. At last, her tears came more and more slowly, till the passion subsided into the low shivering sob which succeeds it. Then Eleanor recollected that the morrow (that dreary word to a mourner !) would bring new duties, and more bitter trials ; and that it was necessary, for the

sake of those around her, that she should endeavour to recruit her faculties by rest. As she left the room, her footsteps paused by her brother's door. All was silent now within: hope, and fear, and anxious watching, all at an end for ever. She turned the lock, and entered—the cold, dead stillness of the chamber smote upon her very soul—the bed-curtains drawn back—the white un-ruffled sheets—the ghastly mockery of repose, which none can picture who have not beheld it. But a few hours back, how different! Yet thus it should be, for there is a deep and awful gulf betwixt life and death, brief though the passage across it.

Eleanor advanced—she withdrew the covering, and looked upon the face of her brother. Oh, that first look upon the dead! She pressed her lips upon the cold and lifeless ones, that never—never till then, had remained cold to a kiss from hers—upon the closed eyes, that never more would beam on her with their warm, bright gaze of affection. Again and again, she passionately kissed them, then sank upon her knees, in the place where she had knelt that morning, and poured forth to the Father of the fatherless, the anguish of her lonely and breaking heart.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Brother, thou art gone before us,
 And thy saintly soul is flown,
 Where tears are wiped from ev’ry eye,
 And sorrow is unknown.

“ ‘ Earth to earth,’ and ‘ dust to dust,’
 The solemn priest hath said ;
 So we lay the turf above thee now,
 And we seal thy narrow bed.
 But thy spirit, brother, soars away
 Among the faithful blest,
 Where the wicked cease from troubling,
 And the weary are at rest.”

MILMAN.

“ They bid me forget thee—they tell me that now
 The grave-damp is staining thy beautiful brow ;
 They tell me the sound of thy gay laugh is o'er ;
 Alas ! shall I hear its sweet music no more ?
 I cannot forget thee ! Thy smile haunts me yet,—
 And thy deep, earnest eyes, bright as when we first met !
 Thy gay laugh returns in the silence of sleep,
 And I start from my slumbers, to listen and weep !”

HON. MRS. NORTON.

IT was a silent day in November,—one of those pale, still, melancholy days, with skies all over grey cloud, and not a breath of air to stir them into life, which form a connecting link between au-

tumn and winter, when the funeral procession of Alfred Falconar entered the churchyard of Cargarth. Those who composed it had been assembled from various quarters—some from Edinburgh, whence mourning coaches appointed for that purpose had started with them at a very early hour that morning; some from the neighbourhood; whilst Sir Anthony Wellwood, who had been summoned by his sister to Rothesay, had accompanied poor Harry, the chief mourner, on his journey thence with his brother's remains. The place of rendezvous was an inn—the only one in that part of the country—about three miles from Cargarth, where, according to custom on such occasions, dinner was provided for such of the funeral train as chose to partake of it on their return. Several gentlemen's carriages, and a train of the tenantry on horseback, followed the hearse to the churchyard. Harry—his cheeks as pale as death, and his lips quivering with the struggle to suppress his tears—walked at the head of the coffin down the sloping path which led to the old family burial-ground, and there, on one side of his father, Alfred was laid in his untimely grave.

It was a crowded assemblage, which, in solemn silence, stood ranged round the burial-place,—and few hearts, if any, in the company could witness the last rite unmoved. There were, amongst others, the two Balmaynes, the elder brother wearing a look of unaffected sorrow,—the younger, for the time being, forgetting his worldliness, and the selfishness which had encrusted

his heart, under the influence of such a scene; and Mr. Anstruther, with a countenance expressive of more genuine feeling than is often witnessed in the mere spectator of a funeral; and Sir Anthony, who, for one brief hour, at all events, had opened his mind to the influence of that sadness whereby the heart is made better, and whose eyes were filled to the brim with most unwonted tears. And many were there besides who had loved Alfred as he deserved: amongst these was Colonel Richardson, who, in the uncontrollable agitation of his kind heart, actually sobbed aloud as the earth rattled on the coffin-lid; and Mr. Dalzell, who had come all this long way to pay the last sad tribute of affection to the memory of one so dear to him, and who—as he cast a glance around the old familiar scene, and remembered the days when he whose young dust was about to be laid to mingle with that of his forefathers was a bright and blooming boy, treading with him many a time and oft the path along which he was now borne to his final rest,—unable to restrain his feelings at the contrast, leant against the wall of the burial-place, and wept like a child. Many an eye there was, too, amongst the farmers and country-people that glistened with no ordinary expression of grief. Mr. Oswald, who made one of the funeral train, looked upon the scene with an appearance of deeper feeling than might have been expected from so proud and self-sufficient a man. And yet few scenes could have been imagined more calculated to affect the mind. The picturesque and primitive-looking churchyard,

with its sheltering trees, whence, at intervals, some of the few brown leaves remaining on their branches would drop softly and silently to the ground; the irregular tomb-stones—some recently placed, some old, covered with moss and half sunk in the ground—the green swelling mounds of earth that on all sides marked the resting places of generations, and the ancient burial-place itself—so near to the church-yard wall that, in the stillness, the ear could catch the rippling sound of the river on the other side,—all these inanimate objects, the very season of the year, and the character of the day, spoke forcibly to the heart; and the errand which had brought them there was one of no common sorrow. How much of lofty intellect, of high-aspiring hopes and eagle-winged endeavours, how much of virtue and of beauty, was that dark, damp grave about to close from the sight of the world for ever! How many a warm, clinging affection, how much of love and happiness, lay down there beside it to rise no more! Such thoughts arose before not a few then present, as the sods were clapped down over the remains of Alfred.

As the last carriage, save only Sir Anthony's, rolled away from the church-yard gate, that gentleman drew his weeping nephew from the burial-ground, where poor Harry had lingered to the very last, giving free vent to those tears which his manhood had so long restrained.

“God bless and keep you, my dear Henry?” ejaculated the old minister, Mr. Cameron, laying his trembling hand on the head of the sobbing

boy, as they parted near the gate. Mr. Dalzell stood there beside him, and his half-inarticulate farewell was not less fervent and solemn. Harry could not answer. He would have flung himself into the arms of his old tutor, had they been alone, but his habitual feeling of constraint in his uncle's presence, and the shyness more or less inseparable from sensibility of character in a child, restricted him, in the present instance, from any such expression of his feelings. Another trial yet awaited him. Just outside the gate, a countryman, in his decent suit of mourning, was standing as if watching for the party, and advanced to meet them; — it was Tam Howison.

“ I couldna’ let ye gang awa’ without speakin’ till ye, Maister Hairy,” he said, his rough voice faltering as if half stifled. “ God bless ye, ma man!” — and he grasped and shook the boy’s hand.

Harry looked up in his face, tried to speak, but the effort was vain; he could only return the kind shake of the hand, make an attempt to clear his voice, and burst into another fit of weeping. His uncle hurried him into the carriage, and, as it drove rapidly away, even Richard Wellwood was moved to something like sympathy by the deep and heartrending sobs which seemed to convulse the whole frame of his little cousin, and which were the only reply uttered by Harry to all attempts at soothing or consolation.

Tam Howison followed the carriage with his eyes till an angle of the road hid it from his

view, then turned away, his strong breast swelling with strangely-unaccustomed emotions, as he took his homeward path by the side of Cargarth Water. The old minister and his guest, Mr. Dalzell, slowly walked back to the manse, revolving thoughts "too deep for tears." There were many sad hearts that night in the farm-houses and cottages around. All who had loved their young laird—and these were all who had known him—felt his death taking place under such circumstances, even more, perhaps, than if he had died among them. He had been forced to quit his ancient inheritance, and a few months after had returned thither to be laid in his father's grave,—a victim, as it was whispered, to sorrow for the loss of his beloved home. This was sufficient in itself to cast a powerful interest over his death. But nowhere were these feelings more agonizingly keen than in the cottage of Mysie Anderson. Beside their desolate hearth—for Jeanie Blake had now lain two months in her grave—the old woman and her daughter had wept, with but little intermission, during the whole of that day. Their tears flowed with still greater bitterness while listening to Tam Howison, who came up the glen in the evening to relate to them the particulars of the funeral. Alfred was remembered and lamented under that humble roof long after his name had become an almost forgotten sound in the ears of some of his near kindred.

That very night, at Mosspatrick, there was but little trace of sorrow. The transient emotions

excited by the funeral had evaporated ere the party assembled round the dinner-table, and the two brothers, and Tom, and Mr. Brisbane, who happened to be on a visit there at the time, sat over their wine, and talked of news and business, and roads and road-meetings, and laughed at times, too, as they had done any day for the last ten years. And in the drawing-room, meanwhile, under a seemly display of weepers and crape, Mrs. Balmayne sat adorning a muslin collar with a very orthodox broad hem, talking and laughing the while with her friend Mrs. Simpson, who was then a visitor in the house. The younger branches of the household chattered and amused themselves as usual, only that, for decency's sake, there was no music permitted.

One exception, however, there was. No entreaties, no persuasions—not even the displeasure of her mother—had sufficed to induce Agnes Balmayne to make her appearance below-stairs that day. She had almost avoided the rest of the family since the news of Alfred's death arrived, but on this, the day of his funeral, she had remained shut up in her own apartment, giving way to a succession of hysterical bursts of grief. Her father having inquired for her, during dinner-time, in a tone of commiseration, Mrs. Balmayne eagerly seized the opportunity of arresting the wonder and surmises of her brother-in-law, Mr. Brisbane, Mrs. Simpson, the governess and tutor, and the servants, by lamenting, “That Agnes, poor thing! should give way to her feelings as she did—but Alfred Falconar and she were old

companions, and she was such a feeling-hearted creature; she was just in the very same way, two years ago, when her cousin Adam Morison died!" But Mrs. Balmayne knew full well that neither Adam nor Eve, nor any mere cousin in the world, would have been lamented as Agnes lamented Alfred. There was something far beyond sorrow for an old companion in the heart of the poor girl. Without exactly knowing the reason of her preference, she had, from her childhood, felt Alfred Falconar to be a superior being to any with whom she ever associated, and while incapable of appreciating his talents, she had owned the influence of his gentle kindness, and the charm of his graceful refinement. Unconsciously to himself—for few young men could be more free from the baseness of vanity—he had been the ideal standard on whose model were formed all Agnes' notions of masculine perfection, and whose society she secretly preferred to any other man's; and whilst he only regarded her as a simple, good-tempered girl, and felt disposed to pity her for being her mother's daughter, she had cherished for him a very different species of sentiment. The intelligence of his death came upon her like a thunderbolt. Alfred dead!—Alfred, so young, so vigorous, so full of life and animation!—for thus she had last seen him ere her family left Edinburgh, in May—it was dreadful, incredible! she felt as if the sun had been extinguished in the sky. Too inexperienced and simple to understand the exact nature of her own feelings, she only knew that she seemed to herself utterly

desolate and miserable, shrank from the presence and the expostulations of every one near her, and found relief in floods of tears, which, if they flowed from a source of no very great profundity, at least denoted affliction keenly felt at the time, and honestly avowed.

CHAPTER XII.

“ There lie letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting, as are, perhaps, their writers ; riddles which have been read, schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity, memorials of friendships and enmities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Saturn consume itself.

“ But what frightens and disgusts me is those fearful letters from those who have been long dead to those who linger on their wayfare through the valley of tears. Those fine lines of Spenser come into my head :—

“ The shade of youthful Hope is there,
That linger'd long, and latest died—
Ambition, all dissolved to air,
With phantom honours by his side !
What empty shadows glimmer nigh ?
They once were Friendship, Truth, and Love !
Oh, die to thought, to memory die,
Since lifeless to my heart ye prove !”

DIARY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

A WEEK after Sir Anthony and Harry had commenced their mournful journey, Mrs. Falconar and her daughters left Rothesay. It would not be easy to describe the feelings with which Eleanor bade adieu to the house where her last quiet days with her brother had been passed—to the room in which he died. During the greater

part of the previous night she had lingered in that room, deserted now even by the last relics of his mortal being. She had wept and prayed beside the empty bed with all the sensations wherewith we take a last look at inanimate objects once sanctified by the presence of the loved and the lost. The hour came, and she quitted them, and quitted the lovely little town to which she had come with far different feelings. The sisters watched it, so long as it remained in view, through their blinding tears, from the deck of the steamer, then Eleanor turned away, pressing her hand against her heart, where lay, beside another relic—the same in kind, in all things else how different!—the bunch of faded primroses, her memorial of the *second* 24th of October.

The first few days after their return home Eleanor only remembered, in after-times, as a confused and dreadful whole, of whose component parts she retained no recollection. The only thing which remained on her memory was the constant haunting of the idea of meeting Alfred in every part of the house, the start of fearful expectation which every opening of the door caused to thrill through her very heart, and then the black, despairing revulsion of thought which followed. Of all besides—of the visits of condolence paid by the different members of their connexion, of the mechanical efforts with which she received them, and endeavoured to listen and reply to them—she never could recall any trace, beyond a consciousness that such things had been.

On the day preceding Alfred's funeral arrived

the letter already mentioned as having been written to him by Clifton, immediately after his illness. Eleanor had, ere it appeared, despatched a few almost incoherent lines to Clifton, informing him of what had taken place. It was some minutes ere she could command herself sufficiently to break the seal of his letter, in compliance with her brother's last instructions, and when she did, the contents—the faint, blotted, almost illegible hand-writing, and the abrupt conclusion, as if from total inability to write more—added yet another pang to those beneath which she was already sinking. And then came the bitter reflection, that, but for his illness, the dying wish of Alfred would have been fulfilled, and she would have had the presence and the sympathy of her lover in the hour of her utmost need. But he spoke of setting off immediately for Scotland. For a moment, she indulged in the hope that he might yet arrive, when a glance at the date—with regard to which, it will be remembered, that Clifton had been misled by Mr. Lavington—told her her hope was vain. She concluded that a second attack of illness had prevented his fulfilment of this intention, and that the letter had probably been thrown aside and forgotten, till then, by his attendants. It was watered with bitter tears, as she thought that had it but arrived a few days sooner, Alfred, though he had not seen him, would have died without even a shadow of doubt on his mind respecting his friend. The letter which he had directed her to send to Clifton she had found in his writing-case, and enclosed in her own.

“What agony it will cause him,” thought she, “if it mention our anxiety in not hearing from him!”

There was another letter in that writing-case, addressed to herself, and dated at the time of her absence at Laverockhaugh. It contained a solemn and affectionate farewell, mingled with the same species of consolation which the writer had all along sought to impress upon her mind ; and in it, as, perhaps, distrusting his own firmness in doing so by word of mouth, he gave a detailed account of the warning dream so often alluded to. This was followed by a few brief directions respecting his private papers, of the arrangement of which Eleanor was to take the sole charge. He informed her, that he had deposited his will in the hands of Mr. Anstruther, previous to leaving Edinburgh ; and that, in it, he had directed the small personal property left him, by the sale of Cargarth, to be equally divided between the younger members of the family, with the deduction of various legacies to old servants and dependents in the country : part of the money to be life-rented by his mother. Eleanor was desired to open the bureau, in Edinburgh, where her brother’s papers were ; to return to Clifton, and to Mr. Dalzell, their respective letters addressed to Alfred, and to retain any of the others there that she chose, “as memorials”—so he wrote—“which, when the first bitterness of grief was over, would, he believed, be dear to her ; and which might serve to recal old happy times to her recollection, as well as times of sorrow,

which they had shared together." Her miniature, which Alfred had purposely delayed sending to Clifton, she was told, that she should find in the same place; and along with it, she was to despatch to him an ancient seal, in rich old-fashioned setting, engraven with the words—*Bide Siccar*—as a last remembrance of his friend. Some few further directions there were, of an insignificant nature; but not one which did not come home to the heart of Eleanor, with that awful sanctity of obligation, which the words of the departed convey to those who have loved them.

A few days after their return to Edinburgh, she made up her mind to this miserable task. She durst not venture upon it in the day, fearing to trust her own composure, and dreading still further to shake the nerves of her sister; feeling, besides, the longing to perform such a duty alone, which is inseparable from deep grief. She therefore communicated her intentions to no one; but, when the whole household had retired to rest, prepared to enter the room, at whose door she even trembled to look—her brother's study—where the bureau stood.

Her hand shook so violently, that, for some minutes, she found it impossible to turn the key in the lock of the door. At last, however, it opened. Eleanor paused upon the threshold; then, with a silent prayer for strength, drew a deep breath, and entered. All was there as it had been left: the sofa stood on one side of the fire-place still; before it was the table, covered with law-books, the writing materials untouched,

and some loose papers beside them secured by a weight. A little pocket Epictetus had been left there by mistake, and there it still lay, with a pencil between the leaves. The walls of the room were covered with book-shelves, which had been put up to receive the contents of the valuable library from Cargarth; in the only spare corner stood the bureau which Eleanor had come to open. The room had a cold, unaired feeling, which seemed to indicate that it was long since it had been occupied; yet, glancing at the table, one might have thought that its occupant had only just quitted it for the night. Eleanor averted her eyes from the sight of her brother's handwriting, which had attracted them in one of the papers, and dreading to linger there, advanced towards the bureau.

Everything there was exactly as she had been told, arranged in an order which plainly shewed what Alfred's anticipations had been, and what the motive of his wishing for her absence in the beginning of his illness. But among all the heart-breaking duties which fall upon those who have been called to mourn the loss of beloved relatives, there is not a more agonizing than the one which Eleanor had now to perform. There is something so like sacrilege in it—something from which the feelings recoil so painfully; it seems like prying into the secrets of the dead. True, between her and her brother, there never had been a secret; yet she felt as if she were doing a deed like troubling his ashes; and every separate paper

which she saw or opened sent a new pang thrilling through her heart. Every one, more powerfully than the last, recalled the days which were gone for ever. There were letters to Alfred in her father's hand—his own bold, round, hearty-looking hand—so like himself, ere misfortune had broken him down; there were some from her mother, many from Clara, but most of all from herself. It seemed, that every line which she had ever written to her brother had been treasured up, from the round half-text scrawl of many years back, to her last note from Laverock-haugh. She had not the heart to read any of her own; a few of the others she glanced into, or read nearly through, with eyes dimmed by her fast falling tears.

Nothing is more mournful than an old letter, written by, or to, a person whom we have loved. It is even most mournful before the grave has cast additional sadness over it; for, how seldom have those feelings, then warm from the heart, survived the lapse of years! how much may have occurred to darken the lot, to change the prospects, perhaps to estrange the hearts, of either party! But when the grave has taken one, or both—when sorrow, time, and change, have been busy with them—when, perhaps, even the very persons and things alluded to in their letters, familiarly as household words, do nothing more than awaken a recollection of somewhat which is long past away—then, indeed, it feels like opening a tomb to read them; or, more properly,

perhaps, it feels like standing a living being among the phantoms of the departed—so beautiful, and so like life, that we—

“Look fondly back,
To clasp them, and they vanish once again.”

And then there were old papers—school exercises, prize copies of Latin and Greek verse, essays written for the “Speculative Society,” and many other things of a like nature. There were also many manuscript poems, in the handwriting of Guy Clifton; these she destined to be treasured up with Alfred’s papers; for as to destroying one that had belonged to him, she would not for worlds even have moved them from their places. Clifton’s and Mr. Dalzell’s letters were tied up, and labelled, and the miniature and seal she found beside them.

The bureau had been her father’s, and contained some very old letters. One there was from her grandfather, relating to the marriage of that gentleman’s sister to the father of the Balmaynes, and addressed to another sister, older than Aunt Annie, and long dead. Another, addressed in a very ancient hand—“Forre the hands of my loving brother, the Laird of Cargarth, at his house of Cargarth, these”—was written by the brother of a more remote ancestor, who had gone out with Montrose. One in particular attracted Eleanor’s attention: it was from her grandfather to her father, when a young man, attending Edinburgh University, and related to the planting of an extensive wood on a certain

spot in the property. This the Laird mentioned as being just then completed—adding, that he had called it Douglas' Wood, in honour of his son, whose sons' sons, he hoped, would see it flourishing over their heads! Eleanor knew the wood well; it had been a favourite resort of hers and Alfred's. Alas, a portion of their paternal earth was all that remained, to cover the heads of the second generation from him who had breathed that hope in such security of its fulfilment!

It was long past midnight ere her task was concluded. At last, however, it was done. She turned from the bureau, and glanced round the room. It felt so dark and desolate, that she had not courage to remain there another instant—the gloomy stillness weighed upon her very heart. She stole softly out, locked the door behind her, and ascended to her sleeping apartment, where, for hours after, her pillow was still drenched in tears, and her very bed shaken by the violence of that convulsive sorrow which, while one single eye was upon her, lay pent up in her own heart, but which now forced a vent in darkness and solitude.

Guy Clifton, all this while, was hovering on the very brink of the grave. The dreadful shock which his weakened nerves had sustained, brought on a second, and even more violent attack of fever, and for several days his life was despaired of. At last, he regained his senses, and his first inquiry was for letters. Mrs. Lavington trembled to give him the two packets sealed with black,

which had successively arrived, but his anxiety left her no choice. A single glance at their directions and seals told him their contents, ere he could summon strength to open them. It was, perhaps, well for him when at length he was enabled to read them through, that illness had reduced him to the excess of weakness in which he then was; for the intelligence, which in his days of health would have rent his very heart, yet, by its strong agony, have denied a vent to grief, now moved him, after a time, to the relief of weeping. There was something dreadfully aggravated in the manner of this affliction, and in the self-reproach, however undeserved, that mingled with his suffering. That Alfred should have died, and he so distant from him—died without hearing from him again, perhaps even thinking him negligent—that reflection, as often as it recurred—and it recurred for ever—caused him a degree of anguish almost beyond endurance. The very first moment in which he was able to sit up in bed, he wrote a few lines to Eleanor. They were but few—for the effort was far beyond his strength—yet, painful as they were, they brought a species of mournful consolation to her. This was the first letter she had received from Guy. Alas, what a first letter! yet it would be hard to say how oft its faint and trembling characters were read and re-read, pressed to her lips, or wetted with her tears; that part, in particular, where he told her that the precious legacy of Alfred—her picture—was the only consolation which, in that hour of wretchedness, his

heart could have received. He did not then feel able to enter on the subject of the mysterious event already detailed. Yet it haunted him for ever with a strange and awful distinctness. Perhaps none but those who still retain, like him, in this prosaic world, that peculiar character of thought denominated the visionary, will be able to comprehend how it should be, that he actually derived a species of comfort from the recollection; yet so it was. Who shall deny—for who can assert the contrary?—that it may, in some rare instances, be permitted the departing soul to follow out the ardent wish formed while it is taking leave of its bodily companion? Who shall deny that it may be invested with a form wherein to appear before the eyes of those it loved best on earth? We cannot, dare not, affirm that it is so, for not until the inevitable hour comes to ourselves will the truth of those mysteries become plain; yet neither dare we affirm that it is not so, for who shall prescribe limits to the will of the Almighty? Instances have been adduced, and facts attested, to dispute whose actual occurrence the proudest philosopher can advance no more than hypothesis, or presumptuous assertion. It is mystery all. Let us beware of presumption where humility alone becomes us.

Youth, and strength of constitution, triumphed over distress of mind, and Clifton slowly recovered his health, though a deep and settled melancholy continued to prey upon him. His usual freedom from egotism led him to strive against its indulgence, so as to be able to meet the affectionate

kindness of his friends with something like cheerfulness; but Mrs. Lavington, with the tact of a gentle and tender heart, readily divined his feeling, and her sisterly sympathy, expressed in looks and actions more than words, seemed to create a new tie between them, and left a deep and abiding impression on the heart of her cousin. It was while still confined to the couch by which Mary had watched with so much of gentle kindness, that, yielding to the natural impulse which prompts man in his hour of suffering to fly for refuge to the sympathy of woman, Guy made her the confidante of his passion for Eleanor; and her intense interest in the story, and warm participation in his every emotion as he told it, seemed to draw them still more closely together, and brought the first soothing influence to his mind, which it had received since the hour that made him aware of his irreparable loss.

So soon as Clifton was able for the journey, he took leave of his kind friends, and accompanied Lord Clifton down to Pevenley, which at that time was a most thoroughly retired and quiet abode, as Lady Clifton and her daughters were at Brighton, and none of the young men at home. Lord Clifton himself did not remain much there whilst his nephew stayed, and the latter found himself left to nearly unbroken solitude, in the midst of its antique magnificence and modern luxuries. The solitude in some measure helped to relieve his heart from the suffocating pressure of sorrow, because precluding the necessity of stifling it beneath a mask—an unnatural exertion,

which, in a mind of sensibility, only drives it within to prey upon the very vitals. Here there was nothing to call him from the indulgence of memory. In the absence of all its modern inhabitants, there is, indeed, an atmosphere of memory overhanging the time-honoured residence of a distinguished family. The long series of family portraits, in particular, covering the walls of the picture-gallery, furnished abundant food for contemplation. There was one of his father, taken when a lad of sixteen, before which Guy particularly loved to linger, endeavouring to retrace, in the smooth, unclouded countenance of youth, his recollection of the marked and saddened features of manhood. Another there was of the unfortunate Rowland Clifton, whose history we have given, in Guy's own words, in another volume, which formed the only exception to the distinguishing mark of the Clifton family—the peculiar style of beauty which ran through the whole race. This portrait represented him as a boy, but totally unlike the rest of his family, even his own brother Gerald, whose likeness hung close by. It seemed that with the rash, passionate, and impulsive character of his mother's country, Rowland had inherited her Milesian features and complexion, for his picture was dark, with an animated and fiery cast of countenance, and bright black eyes, very much resembling hers, which was also there. On his unhappy history, the meditations of Guy were long and frequent, and mournful as they necessarily were, he rather

welcomed and sought to indulge them, for they served, at least for a short time, to distract his mind from the agonizing contemplation of all that he had lately lost, and of the bitter void in the heart, which had succeeded to his brief dream of a friendship too perfect for such a world as this.

From dwelling on these thoughts, Guy was suddenly aroused, just previous to the time he had fixed for returning to town, by a piece of intelligence as unexpected as it was astounding. The firm of Elliott and Lavington had failed! Mr. Elliott, one of the wealthiest men in London, whose credit had been deemed impregnable, who had offered Guy a share in his house as the surest road to affluence—the thing was incredible. Yet so it was. That period will long be remembered in the mercantile world as one when fortunes, which it had taken years of labour to achieve, melted away in an instant, as it had been at the touch of an enchanter's wand, and when public credit itself seemed tottering to its fall. Some such blight had come across Mr. Elliott's house, daring and unsuccessful speculations had completed the mischief; and, in short, in the space, as it appeared, of a day, the man who had been possessed of resources almost unbounded, found himself reduced to ruin. Mr. Elliott had foreseen the coming storm, and while the world had believed him in Paris, had actually been on his way across the Atlantic, in hopes of effecting some arrangement to avert it,

with the American correspondents of the firm. The crash took place suddenly, unexpectedly to Mr. Lavington, whilst his father-in-law was still at Charlestown, and he found himself compelled, as his only resource, to surrender everything to his creditors, whilst the absence of Mr. Elliott ten-fold increased the embarrassments of his situation.

Clifton hastened up to London, penetrated to the heart by this melancholy change. In the fulness of his sympathy for the sufferings of his friends, it never once occurred to him how providential had been his own escape from partaking in his uncle's ruin, which, but for his folly, as it had been called, he must have shared. He found Mary Lavington, the nursling of wealth and luxury, whom he had left but a few weeks before surrounded by all their appliances, the solitary tenant of small and comparatively mean lodgings, in an obscure part of London, despoiled of almost all to which she had been accustomed from childhood, and weeping bitter tears over the fate of her unfortunate father. This was her principal cause of sorrow. Her gentle and affectionate nature felt it far more than the loss of worldly wealth. An old man like her father—accustomed, as he had been, to the respect and consideration of the mercantile world, and, moreover, in no slight degree ambitious and aspiring—to him, misfortune such as this was what he could least easily support. Mary knew him too well to believe that after such a blow he could ever

raise his head again. His was a spirit to which disgrace in the world's eyes is death. These were the thoughts which infused the worst bitterness into a cup sufficiently bitter without their aid; and the contemplation of all these varied subjects of sorrow added, in a ten-fold degree, to the weight which, during the long months of that melancholy winter, hung with such a chilling pressure on the heart of Guy Clifton.

CHAPTER XIII.

“The grave ! Thou knowest not
How large a portion of my heart is there !
. I therefore needs must dwell
Often in thought with those whom still I love so well.”
SOUTHEY.

IT was on a certain evening, towards the latter end of March, in the spring succeeding the death of Alfred Falconar, that the female division of a large dinner-party, assembled at Mrs. Livingstone’s house, had retreated to the drawing-room, where, dispersed through the suite of apartments, they formed themselves into various little coteries.

“ So,” said Miss Forbes Graham, to Lady Anne Drummond, as they were turning over a volume of engravings—“ so your husband’s old uncle Sir John Cochrane is dead, Lady Anne?”

“ He has been dead these three months,” replied Lady Anne.

“ And the heiress, Lady Helen Grant——”

“Grant Cochrane now,” said Lady Anne, smiling.

“Grant Cochrane, then, has not entered into possession yet, I suppose?”

“Not yet. That is, you know, she is under age; she will not be twenty-one for eight or nine months, and, until then, her father is appointed guardian.”

“And they go to London in May?”

“They do.”

“And is it quite true that Lady Helen has refused so many people? Lord John Warden, Mr. Seaton of King’s Abbeyland—and who else is there? Oh, Lord Glenmarley! I heard of more too, I think. She must be very hard to please.”

“I suspect so,” returned Lady Anne, with a quiet smile. “I believe it is all too true, and Lady Rossiewood was not a little annoyed about Lord Glenmarley. But I hear the gentleman is about to console himself with a less cruel fair one not a hundred miles off. Perhaps you can tell me if this be true, Miss Graham?”

“With Gertrude Livingstone do you mean? Why, I have suspected it for some time, but it is not announced yet. I think it would be a very nice match. I hope it *is* true. Gertrude,” added Miss Forbes Graham, as that young lady approached, “where does Mr. Charteris come from? I had no idea he was in Scotland till I met him here to-day.”

“I don’t know where he comes from last,” replied Gertrude, with her usual air of gentle

languor, "but he has not been long in Edinburgh. You know my cousin, Eleanor Falconar, refused him last spring, which threw him into sad despair, but I rather suspect he means to try his chance again, from all I hear."

"Well, I hope his perseverance may be rewarded," said Miss Forbes Graham. "It is a most laudable example of constancy. And Miss Falconar was a very nice girl, I thought. How shocked I was, Gertrude, to hear of her brother's death!"

"Yes, it was very distressing," returned Gertrude, settling her bracelets.

"He was so handsome!" exclaimed Miss Forbes Graham, "and so entertaining and clever! I shall never forget that night at Ferneylee when we acted charades. His ready wit was quite extraordinary."

"I recollect you and he had quite a flirtation," observed Gertrude.

"Yes, my dear Elizabeth," said Mrs. Livingstone, to her sister, as they stood together beside a stand of flowering exotics, in a distant corner of the front drawing-room—"yes, I *do* think I have reason to consider myself a very happy mother. So unexceptionable a match for our dear Gertrude! Title—connexions—a charming young man! So amiable—so pleasing!"

"Lord Glenmarley is a delightful creature, indeed!" exclaimed Aunt Elizabeth. "You are a most fortunate mother, Amabel. But, really, the admirable education you have given your daughters deserved reward."

“I do flatter myself,” said Mrs. Livingstone, with a modest look of conscious virtue, “that Mr. Livingstone and I have discharged our duty to the utmost. But we had a propitious soil to work on. By the way, Elizabeth, now that we have a few minutes’ leisure, there is something I want to ask you about. Mr. Charteris——”

“It is too bad!” indignantly exclaimed Aunt Elizabeth, “to think of the treatment that amiable young man has met with! And actually to persevere in spite of it! It shews a very uncommon strength of attachment.”

“It is really true, then,” inquired Mrs. Livingstone, “that he has renewed his addresses to Eleanor?”

“I can only tell you that Lilius (who speaks sensibly enough on the subject, I must say) informs me that he seizes every opportunity of meeting the girls when they go out to walk, and that the other day he called upon *her*, in their absence, and sat nearly two hours, and——”

“And I trust she gave him encouragement to repeat his visit?”

“As to that,” groaned Aunt Elizabeth, “if she did, I doubt it was to little purpose. You don’t know, of course, what, indeed, she only confessed to me the other day, that most unhappily she came under some engagement with poor Alfred, on his death-bed, to sanction Eleanor’s correspondence with that wrong-headed, double-dealing young man, so long as he continued steady in his profession? At this moment they exchange letters at the rate of two a week!”

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed Mrs. Livingstone, in an accent of utter despondency, “I had no idea that things had got to that hopeless state! What folly!—what madness! Elizabeth, did you not represent to her the consequences of such proceedings?—the probable ruin of Eleanor’s prospects?—the——”

“To be sure I did, over and over again. And so did my aunt. And I must say I believe both Sir Anthony and Peter Balmayne have done the same. As to Mrs. Peter, she declares, with great reason, that she will have no more to do with the matter.”

“And what did Lilius say?”

“Oh, what should she say! She feels the deepest repentance for her folly. And, indeed, both my aunt and I represented to her that we thought there was less harm in breaking such a promise than in keeping it. But she is too weak and irresolute for such a decided step. If the flighty creature would but afford her some decent pretext for breaking with him!”

“I have no doubt he will, some day or other,” said Mrs. Livingstone, “but it may be too late for Eleanor’s welfare. Now I, thinking that all was at an end between her and Guy Clifton, pressed her to dine here to-day, though without saying a word about Mr. Charteris. I thought it would be such a good opportunity for bringing them together. But she wouldn’t come. She and Clara will go nowhere, it seems.”

“Nowhere,—not even to a family dinner; which is perfect nonsense.”

"Oh dear, yes—very overstrained. To be sure," and Mrs. Livingstone looked solemn, "poor things! it *was* a most melancholy event for them—a sad bereavement! But still, in this world, it is our duty to control our feelings, not to indulge them. I really can't but think that going out a little—not *gaiety*, of course, but still mingling with the world,—would do them both, Eleanor especially, a great deal of good. But *I* can do no more, I am sure. One can't force people to act rationally."

It must be owned that it is very obstinate in some people not to throw aside the memory of their buried relatives as easily as others do, and return from the side of the grave into the very midst of this delightful world, as if in fear that its highly-prized enjoyments should escape their grasp. Thus could not the sisters of Alfred Falconar. Their hearts—that of Eleanor, especially,—daily bore deeper testimony to the fact, that the first stunning agony of such a bereavement as theirs is its least agony, that it is the after-sensations which are the true test of all we have lost and of all we have to suffer. Both sisters had lost a friend, a protector—one on whose advice and support, in all seasons of difficulty, they could fearlessly rely,—one whose arm was ever outstretched to ward off any blow that threatened them, or, if that might not be, who helped them to bear it,—one whom they at once loved as the kindest and most sympathizing of human beings, and regarded in some sort as a guardian angel. But Eleanor, the nearest to

him in age, had lost the friend of her very soul, the companion with whom her heart had grown up entwined since infancy,—she had hung on him for support, yet found him sharing her every feeling, and looking on her with pride as well as affection, and all their early domestic trials, all the slights and unkindness of the world, had only served to make them cling more closely to each other. There are no words in language to express the fulness of her sorrow and desolation. No wonder that the sisters shrank from all companionship save that of each other—no wonder that they declined attending “family dinners” at Aunt Annie’s! It is very possible to bow in humble submission to the will of Heaven, recalling its most precious gift, and yet shun the importunate society of the cold-hearted and the worldly, who can neither comprehend our sorrow nor our consolation.

The renewed attentions of Mr. Charteris—his silent, yet marked, assiduities,—never approaching the point sufficiently for repression, yet not to be mistaken in their import,—were in a high degree distressing to Eleanor. She felt this for his own sake; to whose deep and respectful attachment it was not in woman to be insensible, or to feel otherwise than grieved that he should again expose himself and her to the pain of a refusal. She likewise felt his constant crossing of her path, and joining in her most solitary walks with Clara, an evil of no ordinary magnitude in the depressed state of her spirits;—but, above all, this circumstance had the most baleful

effect upon her mother's temper, not lessened by the prompting of her advisers behind the scenes. Eleanor could now scarcely be an hour in her company without having to endure covert insinuations, even open reproaches, levelled against herself and Clifton, while Mrs. Falconar constantly bewailed her own hard fate and the ingratitude of her children. And poor Eleanor, when wounded to the very quick of her tender and affectionate heart, and worn out by long-continued tormenting, had no kind protecting bosom now to shield her from the storm. Often did she retire to Alfred's study, and there, sitting on the sofa before the table where his books still lay, (for she would not suffer one of them to be displaced,) she would rest her head upon them, weeping those bitter tears which there was no hand to wipe away.

She had been sitting thus one evening in April—the precious miniature of Alfred, taken by herself, lying on the table before her, the glass still wet with her tears,—when a summons to the drawing-room from her mother called her up so suddenly, that she ran out of the room, leaving the picture behind her. Mrs. Falconar detained her about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time a servant entered to say that some one wanted to speak with her below. The message was delivered in an indifferent tone, and Eleanor, her mind pre-occupied by other subjects, as indifferently prepared to attend to it.

She descended to the study. A gentleman, in mourning, was seated where she had been sitting,

his head, supported by both his hands, bent over the picture. He did not hear her open the door. She had closed it behind her, and with a slow and trembling step approached the table, ere, withdrawing his hands from his face, he started to his feet. It was Guy Clifton! In an instant they were clasped in each other's arms, and Eleanor, while her own tears burst forth with uncontrollable violence, felt his heart heaving against hers as if it would burst in the vehemence of his agitation. Several minutes elapsed ere either of them could speak, and when at last Clifton found words, it was only to ejaculate, in a broken voice, "Eleanor, the *last* time I was here——" He could say no more, and Eleanor could not reply. Every chord of recollection was thrilling at the sight of him. She sat down, leant her head on her hands, and wept silently.

"Eleanor," said Clifton, at length, taking her hand, "we have not long to be together—we must not waste our time." He drew her towards him, and she raised her eyes to his face, and regarded him with a sensation almost of terror. The room began to be darkened by the shades of evening, but there was sufficient light left to shew her that his countenance was deadly pale, his hair disordered, his eyes sunk as if by long-continued watching, whilst the hand with which he held hers was hot and burning, and trembled in her clasp. "Guy!" she exclaimed, breaking the silence in which they had continued gazing at each other,—"Speak to me, Guy! You terrify me!"

“ Do I terrify you?” he said. “ I would not terrify you for the world! No; God knows, I would not plant another thorn in your pillow! And yet——”

“ And yet—what?” asked Eleanor; for he paused as if unable to finish the sentence. “ What did you come to tell me, Guy? Go on—anything is better than this. Something terrible has happened, I know,” she added, weeping bitterly. “ But God’s will be done!”

“ Say that again, Eleanor!” exclaimed Clifton. “ Let me hear you say so! And oh, do not cry, my own dear girl!” And he clasped her in his arms, while her head fell on his breast, and her tears redoubled at his words. “ Ellen, I cannot—cannot stand the sight of your tears! My beloved, nothing terrible has happened; but I am forced, most unwillingly forced, to undertake a long voyage, which may detain me some time from England. I—I—I am compelled to go to America!”

Eleanor did not answer. She could not. She only clasped her arms round his neck, and sobbed, almost shrieked, in the agony of this stunning blow. It was some time ere she was sufficiently calm to receive, or Clifton to impart, an explanation which may be told in shorter space than his own broken and interrupted words would occupy.

Mr. Lavington had been anxiously looking forward to the arrival of his father-in-law from Charlestown, in order that some arrangements might be entered into with the creditors of the

firm, when he had, just a few days previous to Clifton's arrival in Edinburgh, received a letter from a distant relation of the late Mrs. Elliott, a merchant in that place, informing him that his unfortunate friend had been seized with fever from the combined influence of the unwholesome climate, and the dreadful state of mind into which the news from London had thrown him ; and that although he had so far recovered, he was reduced to a state of such complete prostration, bodily and mental, that his undertaking the voyage at present was hopeless. In this condition, his friend went on to say, the constant talk of the sufferer was of his affairs, and of his own family. " Could he but see some one of them," he declared, " there was much that he could disclose which would facilitate the settlement of affairs ; he could not die in peace without seeing some of them. Nay, had he but his son-in-law with him, had he but some one to assist him, he felt sure that he should very soon be able to make the voyage home ; he could not do it alone ; he was an old man, worn down by misfortune, but all would be easy were Lavington but with him, or his nephew. If none of them took pity on him he should die in this foreign land, and his eyes be closed by strangers."

Entering the Lavingtons' house very soon after the receipt of the letter, Clifton found Mary in a paroxysm of hysterical weeping over it. The creditors would not permit her husband's absence at this time—indeed, if they had, it was nearly impracticable for him to leave London. Her

own situation was such as to render her going a matter almost of impossibility; and were it not so, how could she quit Henry—where command even the necessary funds for such a voyage! And yet, could she ever know peace again—could she ever escape the reproaches of an undying remorse, if her father should breathe his last among strangers! These thoughts did not pass through her mind with more rapidity than they did through that of her cousin. He looked in her agonized countenance, read the letter hastily through, and his resolution was taken."

"Mary," said he, "your father shall not die alone—" "I will go to him."

"Oh, Guy!—will you?" she exclaimed, with a momentary start of relief, but it was only momentary. "No, no; I will not take advantage of such generosity! Think of the delay in your studies!—think of Eleanor!"

"It matters not for delaying them," he calmly replied, though his heart throbbed with intense pain. "This is no case for choice—it is a clear matter of duty. One of us must go to your father, and either return home with him, or receive his last instructions. Lavington and you cannot go, Mary. I can, and will."

And in spite of the agony which it cost him—in spite of Lord Clifton's dissuasives and representations of the degree to which this voyage must delay his legal studies, and consequently impede his advancement in life—in spite even of the thought of Eleanor, backed by all that was urged by Mary—true, in the midst of her own

distress, to the generous feelings of her womanly nature, the noble-minded Clifton wavered not an instant in his resolves, and delayed not an hour in his rapid preparations. He who had been sneered at as a refined visionary, unfit for the every-day conflict of existence, flinched not an instant from this sharp trial of his high-principled and unselfish nature. A few days sufficed to make him ready. One thing alone remained to be done—the hardest, and the last of all. He took his passage in a vessel about to sail from Liverpool, and arrived at Edinburgh, first to bid farewell to Eleanor.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ One kiss of lips as wan and cold,
As life to them shall henceforth be ;
One look, the look that makes us old,
Of utter agony ;
One throb, the bitterest and the last,
Awaking but to deaden pain
In hearts that, when that pang is past,
Shall never ache again ;
And the loosed cord, the broken bowl,
Lie at Hope’s fountain in the soul !”

T. K. HERVEY.

“ ELEANOR !” exclaimed Clifton, when he had finished his tale, and she still hung weeping on his neck, “ I thought I had done right till now, but to have caused you so much misery—to have brought this added grief upon you——” his voice became choked, and he abruptly paused.

“ Do not say so, dearest, dearest Guy !” said Eleanor, raising her head, and checking her tears by a violent effort. “ I am selfish to add to your sorrow in this way. Right ! Yes, you have done right—nobly—like a Christian and a man

of principle. Oh, I could not have loved you as I do if you had acted otherwise!"

"But, Ellen—my Ellen—had I a right to inflict this trial on *you*? To interpose this delay to what was already a distant prospect?"

"Had either you or I, Guy, any right to consult our own good before our duty? Should we ever have been happy, under the reflection, that, in order to attain happiness a little sooner, you had left your poor old uncle to die alone in a foreign land, and acted ungratefully by your cousin? No, no; I was weak and foolish at first, but that is over. We cannot suffer in the end by doing our duty."

"Ellen!" exclaimed he, fervently, "you are an angel! but, oh, could I but have spared you this grief! No, I will not bid you refrain from weeping now, it will, perhaps, relieve you," for yielding to the reaction of her own excited feelings, her tears were again flowing. "Would I could weep!" added Guy, "and I should not feel as I now do. But, my beloved, it is far from a hopeless—it is not even likely to be a long separation. Let us resign ourselves to Him who knows what is good for us. Let us remember that this transitory scene is not our all. We are united, Eleanor, for eternity."

"I believe it, Guy," returned Eleanor. "Oh, in this world neither your heart nor mine could ever set up a rest again."

"But, beyond it, dearest, we shall *all* be united once more. And even here there is a feeling within that tells me a better time is coming.

Look here, Eleanor!" He drew from his bosom as he spoke, a locket, suspended round his neck, containing the flowers of the well-remembered primroses on one side, and Eleanor's hair on the other. Round its rim were inscribed the words—"Ipso in Timore Spes, October 24th, 1823."

"Ah!" exclaimed Eleanor, "those flowers!"

"Look at them, dearest, and remember your own words respecting them. As surely as on that night I had a faint image of our coming fate shadowed out before me, so surely will my present presentiments be fulfilled. Some of the tears—not a few of them—have already been shed by both of us. God alone knows how many yet remain to fall! Yet they may prove—they *will* prove, to both, 'the dew of Heaven,' and after the dew is dried, we may live to enjoy the flowers again."

Eleanor did not trust her voice to answer, but she pressed the locket to her lips, while the soothing words of Guy, even at that moment, brought comfort to her. For a short space both remained silent, lost in thoughts too deep and varied for words, when suddenly a step approached the door; a hand was applied to the lock, it opened, and admitted Mrs. Falconar!

The sight of Clifton, so unexpected and unlikely a visitor, for a moment struck that lady dumb with astonishment. Then, as he started from his seat, she recovered her voice so far as to inquire, by no means in a cordial tone, to what circumstance she was indebted for so unlooked-for a pleasure? No agitation—no recol-

lection of him, so lately lost, in whose company she had last beheld his friend, crossed her mind to derange its composure. A widely-different image was recalled by the sight of Clifton—that, namely, of Mr. Charteris, concerning whose renewed suit she had that very day held a long and mournful colloquy with Aunt Annie and Aunt Elizabeth. The present encounter only served to bring all the particulars of that before her imagination, and to array in her mind all the arguments adduced by the aunts to overcome the lingering scruples of her conscience with regard to seizing a pretext for breaking off the engagement. While, therefore, Eleanor sank into a chair literally gasping at the sight of her mother, and Clifton between conflicting emotions and recollections could scarcely summon voice to answer her, Mrs. Falconar remained calm and unmoved. She took a chair, on Guy's intimation that he had somewhat to tell her, and calmly awaited his tale.

It was heard to the very close, without interruption, and no sooner had he ceased speaking, than she quietly replied that all this was no more than she had expected, and that since his choice was made, he must abide by its consequences. "My most unwilling consent to this engagement, Mr. Clifton," she continued, "was given only on condition of your steadiness, and even that was extorted from me by my poor son, on his death-bed." Here Mrs. Falconar's handkerchief was applied to her eyes. "I now see how vain it is to expect anything of the sort from you, and I

therefore feel it my duty to put a stop to an intercourse which can produce nothing but detriment to my daughter. From henceforth there must be no further correspondence between you."

Clifton started to his feet, while all the blood in his veins seemed to rush burning to his forehead. But ere the words, little less burning, which rose to his lips could find utterance, Eleanor sprang forward, and flung her arms around her mother.

"Mamma, mamma!" she exclaimed, in a broken voice of intense agony; "for pity's sake—for the sake of Heaven—do not say that! Do not—do not be so cruel, so unjust! Do not speak so to Guy!"

"Leave me, Eleanor," said Mrs. Falconar, disengaging herself from her daughter; "this is absolute infatuation!"

"Mrs. Falconar," interposed Clifton, making a violent effort to control his indignation, "how have I deserved the imputation you would cast upon me? Is it a light matter that has led me to act as I have done? How can you reconcile it to your conscience to make the discharge of a duty, necessitated by misfortune, a pretext for violating a solemn promise?"

"I can perfectly reconcile it to my conscience, sir," she haughtily replied, "to withdraw a conditional promise when the condition has been infringed on. You are one of those people who will never remain steady in any rational pursuit, and the present is only too good an opportunity——"

"Opportunity!" exclaimed Clifton, in a tone

which startled even Mrs. Falconar. He paused abruptly, for he felt that indignation, more intense than he had ever before experienced, was rapidly mastering his self-control. "I will not," he said more calmly—"I will not condescend to answer such a charge, the story I have told you is its sufficient refutation. I will only appeal to you, madam, in the name—in the memory of one whom you must have dearly loved—to pause a moment ere you act thus by the sister, by the friend whom he——"

"Oh, Alfred, Alfred!" exclaimed Eleanor, bursting into an agony of tears. "If you had been here to plead for me now!"

"Listen to us for his sake," said Clifton, in a voice of deep emotion, and taking Mrs. Falconar's hand.

Mrs. Falconar paused. Cold-hearted as she was, if left to her own unbiassed judgment she might possibly have yielded, with however bad a grace, to considerations such as were now pressed upon her. But the thought of what her friends would say of *her*, did she once more allow herself to be over-persuaded, arose too powerfully before her to leave any chance of success to the softer pleadings of nature. No feeling so completely warps the moral sense, and subverts the principles of action towards others, or so thoroughly incapacitates a man from comprehending the existence of human feelings amongst them, as habitual and deep-rooted egotism. Mrs. Falconar withdrew her hand from Clifton, looked unmoved on his and her daughter's agony,

and, covering her face with her handkerchief, pathetically lamented her own hard fate, in being the mother of children who gave her no credit for the deep anxiety she felt for their welfare!

The disgust which, in other circumstances, Clifton must have felt with her conduct towards himself, was lost in other sensations. He was too truly noble-minded—his love for Eleanor was too intense and pure, to be sullied by a thought connected with self. He renewed his entreaties, reminding her that the prohibition of their correspondence was a needless cruelty, as, although he never would be guilty of leading Eleanor to deceive her parent, neither of them would ever relinquish the engagement of their hearts. No! Sir Anthony and Aunt Elizabeth had both asserted, that if there were no correspondence, it was not in nature but that “the affair must go off.” Mrs. Falconar reiterated her determination. “If,” she said, “Mr. Clifton had been so much attached to her daughter, he might have remained at home, and attended to his studies, and *then* she should have considered herself bound by her promise.”

Clifton became as pale as death. He covered his face with his hands, and leant forward on the table a few seconds without speaking. But the struggle was not a long one.

“I will not,” he said, looking up—“I will not allow even that temptation to overcome me. Eleanor, God knows that I would have sacrificed life—all—to you! All but duty.”

“And if you would have done so, Guy,” ex-

claimed Eleanor. "I hope—I think—I should have been enabled to reject the sacrifice. Mamma!" she added, turning to where Mrs. Falconar still sat, in conscious virtue and silent dignity—"Oh, mamma! think better of it yet. Instead of being angry with Guy, you must—you cannot but see that he has acted as very few would have done?"

"I hope so," replied Mrs. Falconar, "for the credit of common sense. Let me hear no more on the subject. Mr. Clifton, I presume it is nearly time for you to be gone? Eleanor, remember, if after this night you receive another letter from this gentleman, or send him one, you do it on pain of your mother's everlasting displeasure."

Thus saying, Mrs. Falconar arose, and swept out of the room.

"And now," exclaimed Clifton, the instant she had closed the door, "now the die is cast. What have I done?" He flung himself on the sofa, burying his face in his hands, while his whole frame shook with the violence of his agitation.

There is something in the intense passion of a man's emotions, when they do force a vent, before which the most violent despair of a woman becomes hushed into outward stillness. But in the present instance, Eleanor forgot the added misery which her mother's last words had left like an ice-bolt at her heart; she thought only of Guy, and she sat down by his side, and checked her own tears to whisper consolation to him.

It was long ere Clifton could reply, save by

pressing her hand to his heart, as he struggled to regain composure. At last, he suddenly raised himself.

“I must be gone!” he exclaimed. “How *can* I go? How can I leave you, Eleanor?—my own Eleanor—my darling girl—whose heart I have helped to break? Oh, that you had never seen me!”

“Do not say so, Guy,” faltered Eleanor; “I would rather—rather part with you thus, than live the most prosperous life with any other.”

“I shall go distracted!” exclaimed Clifton. “This is more than I can bear. Eleanor, is there—*could* there be a crime in disobeying commands like these?”

“Guy, Guy—do not tempt me, for mercy’s sake! Are we not commanded to honour father and mother? Could we be happy in deceiving even a harsh parent?”

“No, Eleanor—no; I was very wrong. I shall write to Mary, and she will let you hear of me. It is our only resource. And now, now—my Ellen,—God bless you!”

He clasped her in his arms, while she hung upon his neck, in an agony now too intense for tears. There are some partings in this world which admit of no description, and this was one. But it was not till the door closed behind Guy, as it seemed for ever—not till the silence and desolation of the empty apartment smote upon her senses, that Eleanor became alive to the full consciousness of her misery. Uttering a low cry of despair, she pressed her hands to her throbbing

temples, while not a tear would come to relieve the suffocation at her heart. She was not aware that any one had entered the room till a soft touch pressed her shoulder, and the voice of Clara startled her.

“Ellen,” said she, “is this possible? *Can* mamma have acted as she has just told me?”

“Oh, Clara, Clara!” exclaimed Eleanor, hiding her face in her sister’s bosom; “he is gone—gone, and I shall never see him again!” And with these words—

“The chain that bound her soul was broke—
She sat her down and wept.”

CHAPTER XV.

“By gar, I shall procure a you de good guests, de earl, de knight, de lord, de gentlemen.”

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

LETTER FROM AUNT ELIZABETH TO AUNT ANNIE.

“Ferneylee, July 17th, 1825.

“MY DEAR AUNT—The house being at last somewhat quiet, I hasten to write to you, knowing how anxiously you must be expecting news of our gay wedding. Indeed, it is a thousand pities that your rheumatism would not allow you to be present, for a more delightful scene I seldom remember to have witnessed. I must reserve the full details till we meet, for really they would fill a volume; but upon my word, Amabel has every reason to be proud of the figure her family have made in the world! It was a beautiful sight to see them all assembled together! George—the dear fellow!—with that elegant creature Lady Susan, and their lovely little

boy, and Amabel, with her husband, and Bob, really looking handsomer than ever, and so full of fun and frolic! It is time enough for him to be thinking of making a choice yet; but I have no doubt, when he does, that it will not discredit the family. There is something very like a flirtation between him and Miss Hope Lindesay, who is here at present; but, to be sure, young men *will* flirt, so that may be no rule; at any rate, I should not like to have it mentioned on *my* authority, as Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone might not, perhaps, like it. He brought his brother-officer, Mr. Anthony Wellwood, with him, a fine-looking young man. I think there is something between him and Lady Patricia, Lady Susan's sister. Not that I should quite like to have it said that *I* said so; at the same time I think it would be a match that would give great satisfaction to his family.

“ The house has been literally crammed with company. We had the Marquis of Auchtermay, Lord Glenmarley's uncle; his lady; his son, Lord Strathcallum; and his daughters, Ladies Cecilia and Alexina Mackenzie. Then there were Lord Glenmarley's sister and her husband, Lord and Lady Woodleigh, Sir James and Lady Forbes Graham, with the three young ladies, Lord Aylesmore, (they say the great English heiress, Miss Berkeley Digges, refused him the other day!) Sir Arthur Oliphant, the Hope Lindesays, Lady Patricia, Lord John Warden, Mr. Seaton, Miss Farquharson, Miss Gentle—poor body, so delighted with the wedding! and, indeed, she and

Miss Farquharson were most useful to my sister. It was so kind, too, to think of asking Miss Ireland, poor thing! when the house was so full; but Mr. Livingstone and my sister forgot nobody.

“ The wedding took place on Tuesday evening, about nine o’clock. The bridesmaids were, Lady Patricia, Lady Cecilia Mackenzie, and Miss Isabella Forbes Graham. Lord Strathcallum was best-man. But pretty as all the bridesmaids were, nobody could look at anybody but dear Gertrude. At least, I am sure *I* could not; and Miss Farquharson said the same. She was dressed in the richest blonde over white satin, with a blonde veil, fastened to her head by a wreath of orange-flowers. Her travelling-dress was exquisite, (they set off directly after the wedding,) and she looked more beautiful than you can imagine. She was a good deal agitated; but still, you know what a sweet composed creature she is, and she bore the parting wonderfully well. My sister was much overcome; and dear Amabel, who is not strong at present, got quite hysterical. But such a marriage is not a thing to cry for, I am sure. The ball was very splendid, and kept up very late; and the following night, there was one for the tenants and work-people. When we meet, which I expect will be in a few days, you shall have all particulars.

“ I must say, looking at the prosperity of my sister’s children, I could not help observing to her, last night, that Lilius may have many reflections on herself, for her foolish indulgence towards her family, when she sees the course of conduct

they have adopted, and how it is likely to end. There was poor Alfred ! had he but had the common sense to follow your advice, Aunt, and endeavour to render himself agreeable to Miss Maclehose, when you offered him an introduction to her, it might have been the saving of his life, as well as of the estate. Such an elegant, handsome creature as he was, no girl could have resisted him ; and then Cargarth need not have been sold, and he would not have fagged and studied himself to death, as I am sure he did. And that girl, Eleanor ! I declare, as Mrs. Livingstone says, it drives one past all patience to think of her ! After seeing with her own eyes what an idle, unprincipled young man that Clifton turned out—and after her mother had explicitly put a stop to the affair,—the only sensible thing she ever did,—and knowing, as she does, how desirable it is that, with her trifling fortune, she should form a good establishment, and what an advantage it would be to Clara—to go, after all that, and refuse that amiable young man, Mr. Charteris, again, when he came forward so handsomely, there are no words strong enough to mark one's sense of such abominable behaviour ! No wonder that her mother was enraged. I am sure you and I, aunt, have hardly been able to speak civilly to her since ; and Mrs. Peter told me, you know, how disgusted Sir Anthony had been. He as good as said he would have no more to do with her. I dare say she will never have another offer in her life ; for it is incredible how soon these reports of *attachments* get abroad,

and how they ruin a girl's prospects. And the girl is losing her looks entirely; her lips are getting as white as her cheeks, and she has grown quite thin. I wonder what she expects to make of herself. I was really much displeased with Emily Hay and Mrs. Richardson, the other day, for taking her part, as they did—quite hotly, indeed—pretending to *admire* Clifton's wild, unsettled conduct, and assuring me, that we should see them husband and wife one day. It was by no means a proper subject to entertain me with. I have been forced on these unpleasant reflections, by an incident that occurred yesterday; and I really must beg, aunt, that you will take the first opportunity of hinting to Lilius, that she had better look after her daughter, Miss Clara. I wish she may not be following her sister's nice example. I was, as you may suppose, much shocked to overhear her name mentioned by two young men, in the billiard-room, (I was in the book-closet, and they did not see me,) in a light sort of manner, calling her a little angel, or some such nonsense; and then one of them said, he feared she was already appropriated by young —, somebody, whose name I could not catch, though I listened with all my ears, who had just returned home, they said. Then there was some laughing about this person's admiration of her, when Amabel came into the room, and interrupted their edifying conversation. It is really pleasant to hear one's niece spoken of in this way! Think of the girl being ruined by such improper reports, before she is even come out!

Of course, whoever the man may be, it is somebody who has nothing; and then there will be another engagement affair. It makes one quite sick to think of it; and, with proper management, such a pretty girl might have been got off really well. But who can pretend to manage a set of obstinate fools?

“ I must now say good-bye, my dear aunt. With many kind regards from Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone, and the young people, believe me,

“ Your affectionate niece,

“ ELIZABETH FALCONAR.”

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF MRS. LAVINGTON'S
TO ELEANOR FALCONAR.

London, July 18th.

• • • • •

“ I read over all that I have said, my dear Miss Falconar, only to wonder at the coldness of my own expressions, and to perceive how vain is the endeavour to utter all I feel in thinking of you, and of the sacrifice which, in conjunction with my dear and noble-minded cousin, you have made to those who never can repay you. Heaven knows, the tears I shed fall as much for you and him as for the sorrows of my poor father! It is my only consolation to think, that I have the power of being, in some degree, instrumental to

your peace of mind, by conveying betwixt you those messages which you have been so harshly denied the privilege of writing for yourselves. Oh, how vain—how foolish the thought, that true affection can be taught to forget by methods such as these! Perhaps, a stranger ought not to say this to you ; but can *we* consider each other as strangers ?

• • • • •

“ I have faithfully transcribed every word which Guy addresses to you. Alas, had it not been to *me* he wrote, I fear he could have said much more ; I fear, he could have dwelt upon the desolation of his heart in the land of strangers —the sickness of hope deferred—all the sufferings to which his noble delicacy would not let me be privy, since it is for my father they are endured. But I am very wrong to sadden you thus, and, perhaps, in some degree, mistaken ; for he possesses a strength of principle, and a firm reliance on Providence, which will be instrumental in preserving him from despondency. Did I not think so—and did I not, likewise, trust in that beneficent Providence, how sad it would make me to think of him !

I have told you how my poor father clings to Guy, how he dislikes even to lose sight of him for a moment. Guy tells me—and I believe him —that the consciousness of being able to cheer the solitary old age of one whose kindness to himself he cannot forget, is sufficient to repay him for any individual sufferings he may have

borne. I feel this peculiarly, because, although I will say that my father always regarded him with affection (who could do otherwise?) yet his ways of thinking, and all the habits of his life, were such as to prevent his doing Guy anything like justice, and, indeed, very often led him to speak harshly to, and sneeringly of him. Were his mind any longer capable of comprehending it, how must he be affected by that recollection now! But I see too plainly, from my cousin's letter, however he strives to soften the miserable truth, that my poor father's intellect has given way beneath the pressure of disease and affliction, and that, to him, existence is now little more than a dream. Guy has been unable to procure from him the slightest information relative to many things whereon he alone could have satisfied my husband and his creditors. His bodily weakness is likewise great—so great, that his medical attendant holds out little hope of his being able to undertake the homeward voyage, the more especially as he himself seems to have lost all desire to move, and shrinks with alarm from the proposal of any change. It is, indeed, a heavy trial to all parties, and its indefinite prospect of termination renders it worse to bear.

“ Guy seems to think the friend at Charles-town, who first apprised us of my father's danger, extremely kind and hospitable; were he so inclined, he says, he need be at no loss for society, but that, as I know, was not the purpose of his going, nor is its want any privation to him. The place where my father resides is not exactly in

the town, but in a small house, surrounded by a beautiful garden, on the banks of the Ashley river. I am glad of that; for though, to a certain extent, ‘the mind is in its own place,’ yet it does seem to me sadder and more dreary to brood over the sorrows of this sorrowful world in a hot and crowded town, than under the green trees and pure air of the country.

• • • • •

“ You will write to me, soon, I know, my dear Miss Falconar, and let me hear that you are not suffering in health or spirits, and send me a consoling message to despatch across the Atlantic. Oh, do not suffer your spirits to sink! trust me, a better time is coming. Even in this world, ‘verily there is a reward for the righteous.’ God bless you.

“ Ever your most sincere friend,
“ MARY LAVINGTON.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity !”

WORDSWORTH.

“ Gracious my lord,
You know your father’s temper ; at this time,
He will endure no speech.

Then till the fury of his Highness settle,
Come not before him.”

WINTER’S TALE.

THE scene of our story shifts once more to Cargarth, though to Cargarth under a different aspect to that which it had last worn to the eyes of its young dispossessed proprietor, when he quitted it for ever. Silence, and solitude, and desolation, had fled as before an enchanter’s wand. Liveried servants lounged about the hall, the bustle and stir of a great establishment prevailed in-doors ; a large addition to the house had been some time completed, and an upholsterer and his men were now actively engaged on its internal decorations ; half a dozen gardeners were employed without, in bestowing new beauties upon the grounds ; all, in short, bespoke the

activity and importance of wealth; yet, to some eyes, it is probable that the still, simple, unpretending beauty and repose of old times, would have been more attractive than all these pompous innovations. So, at least, thought our friend Tam Howison, with the untaught yet unerring taste implanted by nature, as he paused for a moment in his employment of sinking stakes for a park paling, and drawing the back of his hand across his forehead, stood, in a musing mood, gazing at the house, and recalling by-gone days. His meditations were interrupted by the game-keeper, who came hastily up to him, gun in hand and pouch on side, followed by three pointers, howling, leaping, and wriggling, in impatient ecstasy, at sight of the shooting apparatus.

“ *Gude guide us, Tam, man!*” was his first ejaculation. “ *What’s comed ower the young laird? Hae ye no seen him nae gate?*”

“ *Hae I no seen him nae gate!*” responded Tam —“ *where wad I see him? I jaloused that he was aff to the hills wi’ you.*”

“ *De'il a fit wi’ me!*” replied Peter Mac Murdo, the gamekeeper —“ *and he canna gang wantin’ me an’ the dowgs,—bide still, Fanny, ye sorra!*” —(this was addressed to one of the pointers, who leaped up and placed her fore-paws upon his breast, with a most moving whine.) “ *It just beats’ a’!* He sent me word to be ready afore ten o’clock, an’ it’s half twal noo (wheesht, Ponto! the beast’s clean wud to be aff), an’ ne’er a sicht o’ him to be seen. I was up at the place e’en noo, an’ aye o’ thae English flunkies wi’ the

muistit heeds tellt me he thocht he was i' the leeberary wi' the auld laird. I was on him to gang ben an' see, an' speir gin' I was to wait ony langer, but catch ane o' them budgin' for me!"

" Set them up!" exclaimed Tam—" a stinkin' set ! the hooss is clean turned tapsilteerie wi' them. There 'll be a wheen mair come to Burlindean, I'se warrant, wi' the young leddy an' ma lord."

" Ay, ay, nae doot; they came- a' to Burlindean o' Tyesday—(de'il's in ye, Ranger, man, can ye no hand yer yowffin?) But I canna bide claverin' here,—I maun gang an' see gin' he's no to be seen ; it's the deev'lishest thing to be keepit daunerin this gate. I was etlin to be up at the heigh Blackhope Muir, the day—there's a wheen braw covies there—but we'll no hae nae time for naething." And off trudged Peter, followed by his eager companions, in search of the missing sportsman.

Being somewhat " farther ben" than Peter in the family affairs, we shall take the liberty of following the captive Marmaduke to the library, whither a summons from his father had brought him, directly after breakfast, just as he was taking up his gun and setting forth to enjoy one of the finest mornings in the very beginning of the shooting season. There, by a window, stood the youth, with a countenance of calm determination, and an irrepressible gleam of his native humour still keeping its ground in its eye. Mr. Oswald, the while, traversed the room with strides rather

too hasty to be dignified, and with a countenance of portentous meaning. A pause of some minutes' duration was broken by him, as he came to a full stop opposite his son.

“ You actually presume to tell me, sir, that you will not give up this infatuation, and offer yourself to Lady Helen Grant Cochrane, the——

“ Actually, sir,—such is my ultimatum,” was the young man’s decided reply.

“ Daughter of my oldest friend,” pursued Mr. Oswald, without heeding his son’s interruption—“ the heiress of a property which it has been the dearest wish of my heart to see restored to our family—the—the—the—the—a lovely girl, and I do, in my soul believe, attached to *you*!”

“ About as much, sir, with permission, as she is attached to *you*.”

“ D—n it!” exclaimed Mr. Oswald, losing all sense of dignity and decorum, “ will you persuade me out of the evidence of my own senses?”

“ May I ask, sir, which of your senses it was that told you that Lady Helen Cochrane was attached to me? There never was a grosser mistake in this world. She does not care twopence for me, nor I for her.”

“ I request and desire, Mr. Marmaduke Oswald, that you will be a little more measured in your expressions, and gentlemanly in your language, sir, when you mention any young lady in my hearing—much less the daughter of the Earl of Rossiewood. What proof? May I ask, what—what—what evidence can a delicate female give of—of—of—of her feelings? her—her secret pre-

ference for any man, beyond what your mother and I have both remarked in Lady Helen?—Silent evidence, sir—rejection of many more exalted offers—preference of——”

“ Of any man under the sun but me!” exclaimed Marmaduke, in desperation. “ It is nonsense to speak another word upon the subject. I am deeply grieved to have offended you, sir; but you must all along have perceived—any one not wilfully blind must have perceived—that you could never manufacture me into a lover of Lady Helen’s. I have already told you my sentiments for Miss Falconar, and that I am sure she cannot fail to have perceived them; so that I could not in honour address Lady Helen, even were I so inclined.”

“ In honour, sir!” shouted Mr. Oswald. “ And who—who the devil, sir, authorized you to manifest your sentiments to any lady without *my* consent? You knew *my* sentiments. Where was your honour then? Who gave *you* leave to commit yourself with any one?”

“ The same power which made me a free agent, sir,” returned the son, in a haughty tone. “ I was not aware that my feelings and affections were to be at the disposal of any human being but myself.”

“ You were not aware? You were well aware, sir. Free agent! how should a son be a free agent, when he has a father? What has been the object of my life? Why have I fixed my most intense hopes upon you, except because in you I had hoped and designed that the dignity

of our family, so long eclipsed, should be revived once more? Why did I purchase this place, when so many more splendid courted my acceptance, but because it marched with Burlindean, one of the lost properties of my ancestors? And now, when the property lies, I may say, within your grasp, to hear you declare that you will not avail yourself of the opportunity—that you will not pay your addresses to a lovely, amiable, accomplished girl—gracious powers! were I asking you to marry a woman with a hump-back, it would be a different matter!—it is insufferable, sir—it is intolerable—it is not to be borne!"

"I am sorry for it, sir," was Marmaduke's reply, in a firm, but respectful tone. "I cannot possibly disgrace and perjure myself by addressing one young lady, when my heart is another's; and I have already told you, that were I to do so to-morrow, it would only be to meet with a refusal. Your plan is altogether founded on a delusion."

"To the devil with your delusions!" ejaculated Mr. Oswald, waxing more and more wroth every instant, and resuming his pedestrian exercise up and down the room with redoubled vigour. "Did you ever try, sir? Did you ever set yourself to ascertain whether it was a delusion? Answer me that. Did you?"—And once more he came to a full stop—his hands supporting the skirts of his coat, after the most approved fashion of indignant elderly gentlemen, and his eyes fixed on the undaunted visage of his refractory son.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Marmaduke; "I

should have been acting a most unworthy part in so doing. I never loved Lady Helen for her own sake, and neither inclination nor necessity prompt me to love her for the sake of her fortune."

This was pouring oil upon flame. "Her fortune, Mr. Marmaduke Oswald!" burst forth the angry sire—"her *fortune*! And how, pray—how dare you venture to stigmatize your father, sir, as a fortune-hunter? Am—am—am I a likely person to desire any young woman for my daughter-in-law from such a motive? Do I—do you, stand in need of fortune? Remember to whom you are speaking, sir! I—I—I am shocked by your total, your utter forgetfulness of what is due to your family. You are well aware of the cause of my wish to see you united to this amiable and deserving young lady, whose own rare merits—"

"I acknowledge them," interposed Marmaduke—"I acknowledge them all, sir. But, pardon me, if I say, it matters little what the *cause* may be, which in either case is productive of the same effects, making you put a force upon the dearest inclinations of your son."

"The dearest inclinations of my son, sir! Is my son to be absolved from all regard to the dearest inclinations of his father? Are the bonds of filial submission to be broken, in order to gratify a hot-headed fancy? Here have I fixed my heart for years on the attainment of one object, which ought to be not less sacred in—in—in your eyes than in mine, and now to be thwarted at the very goal!—to be told, when I did but

request your performance of what ought to have been no task, sir, that you would not—that you *could* not, forsooth!—that you had already given away your precious heart!"

"I did tell you so, sir," exclaimed Marmaduke, his wrath in turn becoming hotter and hotter; "and I must take the liberty of telling you so again; for me to address Lady Helen, secure as I am of a refusal, would be the most dishonourable mockery, and, I must say——"

"And *I* must say, sir," broke in Mr. Oswald, in a voice of thunder, "that I will listen to nothing more on the subject; and that, moreover, you may address Lady Helen Cochrane or not, as you please, sir; but that, unless you do, you need look for no countenance, sir—no—no—no assistance—you need expect *nothing* from me! And this, Mr. Marmaduke Oswald, is *my* ultimatum." And so saying, Mr. Oswald's hand descended upon a folio, which graced the library table, with an emphasis so mighty, that the roof rang again. He remained for one instant stationary, fixedly regarding his son, then turning on his heel, left the apartment.

"I am in a glorious scrape now," ejaculated Marmaduke, as the door clapped to behind his father. "Oh, the devil take all march-dykes, and family pride, and Oriental despotism, say I! What, under Heaven, is to be done now? I could find it in my heart to blow out my own brains."

With this conclusion, the young gentleman threw the window wide open, placed his hand on

the sill, and, vaulting over, alighted in the midst of a bed of mignonette, in which his sudden descent caused no small havoc. At that moment, he found himself assaulted, and almost knocked down, by the boisterous welcomes of Ponto, Fanny, and Ranger, who came rushing round a corner, followed by the nearly despairing Peter Mac-Murdo.

“ Haud awa’, ye deevils !” roared Peter, sending his voice before him ; “ gin’ I win at ye, I’se gie ye’t !” and his whip cracked responsive to the words. “ Od, Maister Marmyjewk, is this you, sir ? I was just dung doited waitin’ on’ o’ ye ; an’ the dowgs is clean gane gytie.”

Marmaduke hastened, as collectedly as might be in his present state of mind, to make his peace with the somewhat irritated functionary. He then meditated sending Peter to shoot alone, but, upon second thoughts, resolved to accompany him, since, however little he might feel “ i’ the vein ” for the moors, he was still less so for remaining at home ; and remembering that the Rossiewood family were all great equestrians, he believed, in the bitterness of his heart, that if he went out to ride he should be certain to meet some of them, let him take which way he would. — “ For,” said he to himself, “ my evil genius seems, for the present, to have taken my fate into his especial keeping.” He soon, therefore, found himself threading the wood with Peter, on his way to the hills.

The fresh, delicious air, and the excitement of shooting, to a keen sportsman like Marmaduke,

were not long in effecting at least a partial removal of his despair ; yet still so far astray were his senses on this eventful day, that Peter, in the servants' hall at Cargarth House, during the evening, promulgated it as his private opinion, that, " The young laird wasna', by nae means, that like himsel'. Od, woman!" he continued, addressing one of the housemaids, " he gaed on like a daft body. He missed sax o' the brawest shots that ever ye seed, an' ance he fired within three inch o' Ponto's tail, an' maist felled the beast, an' my word he wad hae been an angry man gin ony ither body had dune that saam ! An' I had aye to roar an' speak till him twae three times afore he heard me, an' he couldna' gie a body a wise-like answer till naething—and fleeing awa' that gate, afore we had- been fower hours on the hill!"

But for an explanation of the latter charge against the young laird, we must follow his adventures on the moor. Here, in the first place, he had not walked long—though long enough to miss three of the *sax* shots so feelingly lamented by Peter—when three sportsmen became visible, advancing from the opposite direction, who, on approaching, proved to be Mr. Balmayne, his son Tom, and Mr. Brisbane. This rencontre did not tend to restore Marmaduke's equilibrium. Mr. Balmayne and he had not met since his return from the Continent, and he had not only to listen and reply to many congratulations on that event, but to endure a narrative even longer than usual, touching a new bridge across the Cargarth

water, with Mr. Balmayne's views on which subject he was requested to possess his father. Then Tom Balmayne, by way of being very facetious, alluded, with peculiar significance, to the recent arrival of the heiress and her family at Burldean, and "had no doubt Mr. Oswald had taken that side of the hill on purpose just to get a peep at the chimneys of the house, always better than nothing!" While Mr. Brisbane, perceiving from the haughty look of astonishment which was Marmaduke's only reply to this insinuation, that the subject was far from agreeable, added a reproachful "Ha, ha, Tom! come, come, that isn't fair now!" Marmaduke was too frank and open, and had too much of the *only son* about him, withal, to be in the habit of taking much pains to conceal his feelings, and as he bade the party a somewhat abrupt farewell, and strode manfully away through the deep heather, there were sufficient indications of his internal emotions visible in his manner to induce Mr. Brisbane to remark, "Ha, ha! young Oswald has the black dog on his back, I see! I'll lay my life there has been some quarrel between him and the old Nabob on the subject of the heiress. Rather an unlucky remark that of yours, Tom. Poor fellow!—ha, ha!"

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Jocky said to Jenny—‘ Jenny, will you wed ?’
‘ Neer a bit,’ quo’ Jenny, ‘ for my tocher’s gude—
‘ For my tocher’s gude, I winna wed with thee.’
‘ E’en’s ye like,’ quo’ Jocky, ‘ ye may let me be.’ ”

SCOTTISH SONG.

“ WHAT the deuce *shall* I do !” exclaimed Marmaduke to himself, as he and Peter sat down by a little mountain-burn to eat their luncheon.
“ My head is well-nigh turned with thinking, and not a thought will come to my aid.”

“ Gudesake, sir !” interrupted Peter, “ dinna gar the flask play flee that gate amang the stanes —ye’ll hae’t a’ to bits !”

“ What man was that who spoke to you on the hill, half an hour ago, Peter ?” inquired his young master, in an absent tone, as Peter went to pick up the shooting-flask which its owner had so unceremoniously cast from him.

“ Lang Adie Walkinshaw, sir, the Burlin Dean gemmkeeper,—Lord Lintrose an’ anither chap’s oot shooting, the day ; an’ says Adie, says he—
‘ Peter’ ——”

"Confound it!" ejaculated Marmaduke, starting up—"d'ye think they are anywhere in this direction!"

"Sir!" exclaimed Peter, with open eyes and distended mouth.

"Oh, nothing—nothing!" And, somewhat ashamed of his own impetuosity, the young gentleman reseated himself on the heathery bank, while his eye wandered over the rich woods and lawns of Burlin Dean, discernible, from this height, about two miles off, and deep in a valley. "Eat your luncheon, Peter—I don't feel hungry." And, turning his back upon Peter, he pulled from his waistcoat-pocket a letter of Lady Glendinning's, and began to re-peruse it.

A silence of some ten minutes' length ensued, broken only by the vigorous mastication of Peter and of the dogs, as, lazily stretched around, they consumed their portion of thick oat cakes. All at once, Marmaduke sprang to his feet, slapping his hand against his thigh with an energy which transfixed Peter to the spot, and set the three dogs to howling and capering around him, in expectation of further sport.

"It will do, by Jove—it will do!" he exclaimed. "I'll try it. Matters can't be made worse. Peter," hastily turning to his astounded follower, "I've just recollected some particular business which will prevent my shooting any more to day. Just go on by yourself—and keep in those brutes, will you? I don't want them with me."

And resuming his gun, the young sportsman

stayed no further parley, but set off down the face of the hill in double quick time, leaving Peter stupefied by astonishment. “Weel,” he at length exclaimed, as he recovered the use of speech, and releasing his grasp of the dogs’ ears, turned him once more to his unfinished repast—“weel, that beats! After that, ony thing!”

An incredibly short space of time, meanwhile, placed Marmaduke before the door of BurlinDean, an elegant modern mansion, built and finished in the most complete style. Here, almost for the first time, he paused to take breath, and to meditate the best manner in which to set about the scheme which had brought him thither. While, with a still increasing sense of its strangeness, he revolved in his mind how to obtain an interview with Lady Helen, unknown to the heads of the house, the front door opened, and a little boy, of nine years old, came running down the steps.

“How do, Arty?” said Marmaduke, laying hold of him. “Is mamma at home?”

“No,” replied the little fellow; “there’s nobody at home—nobody but Helen. Mamma’s gone out in the barouche with aunt Jane, and papa’s gone to ride. Helen’s in the flower-garden, and who do you think she’s walking with?”

“I don’t know, I am sure, Arty?”

“Cousin Sholto. He went out to shoot with Willy, but I saw him come back, a while ago, and go to the garden, and Helen was there. Cousin Sholto came here last night. Do you know,” lowering his voice, “I don’t think mamma was

very glad to see him—but we are all so fond of him!"

" Well, Arty, I shall go into the library, and do you, like a dear little fellow, run and ask sister Helen, with my compliments, to be so very kind as to come there and speak to me for five minutes—tell her I'll not detain her longer, and shall take it as the very greatest favour if she'll come."

" Ah!" exclaimed Master Arthur, clapping his hands, " what fun! Cousin Sholto will be *so* angry!" And off he ran.

Oswald proceeded unnoticed to the library, where he took a chair, and began turning over the books and reviews which lay scattered on the table. Presently, finding his seat somewhat uneasy, he arose, and walked to the window, a large French one, opening upon a terrace, which led to the flower-garden. Still no symptom of Lady Helen. He returned to his chair, then, after a few minutes' further trial, quitted it once more. In short, after the passage of about ten minutes, and just as he had arrived at that climax graphically termed "the grand fidget," the window was at length darkened. He looked eagerly up, and to his great joy, yet equal trepidation, beheld the graceful figure of Lady Helen.

She entered, looking, so Oswald thought, remarkably pale, and he could even fancy that he perceived the traces of tears round her bright blue eyes. Neither was there much of her usual ease in the somewhat embarrassed and uncomfortable look with which she welcomed him. That

duty performed, she seated herself in a large arm-chair, and Oswald had nothing for it but to follow her example. A portentous silence ensued, which was broken by her ladyship.

“This is a lovely day, Mr. Oswald; and I see you have been shooting?”

“I have,” returned he. “I think I saw Lord Lintrose at a distance.”

“Not unlikely. Willy was out in your direction. This is his first season.”

“Ah!”

“What shall I say next?” thought Lady Helen. “I am sorry mamma and papa are from home, Mr. Oswald,” she resumed.

“Why, I scarce expected to find them at home,” said Marmaduke, drawing a deep breath, and passing his fingers through his hair. “And I——” he paused.

“Now—now for it!” said poor Lady Helen, to herself. And she too collected her breath, and sat in awful expectation.

“Lady Helen!” exclaimed her visitor, throwing aside, by a violent effort, the reserve and awkwardness of his first demeanour, “it is absurd and cowardly in me to waste the precious time in this manner. You see before you,” he continued, a gleam of humour rekindling in his eye, “a man placed in the strangest and most disagreeable predicament that can well be conceived. I have taken a most extraordinary resolution; there are few, very few ladies from whom I durst hope for forgiveness, but I think I

know you, and may venture to cast myself on your generosity. May I proceed?"

"Most assuredly, Mr. Oswald," replied Lady Helen, beginning to take courage from this odd preamble. "I shall try to justify your good opinion."

Without permitting himself another minute's pause or deliberation, Oswald dashed at once into his subject. "Lady Helen," he said, "you have long been the friend of my sister Lucy, and I must confess that, at least, an indirect encouragement of her giving has led me to venture on this step. She gives me to understand that your penetration has seen through certain schemes—hopes—of my father's; that you did me the justice to—to—in short, it never entered my head to aspire, and—and—"

"In short, Mr. Oswald," interposed Lady Helen, blushing very deeply, but speaking in a cool and collected tone—"in short, it is a great pity that conventional rules should prevent one speaking plain English, when it would shorten one's way so very much; and in the present case there are no listeners to be shocked by a couple of honest people daring to tell each other the truth, so why should we not understand each other at once? I am sure I have long wished it. You want to tell me that you are perfectly aware that I—that I am not in love with you, though your father, perhaps, tries to persuade himself otherwise! I know quite well that you are aware of it, and I also know that you never were, and

never will be, a lover of mine, and that you are too independent to affect an attachment you do not feel, though I *have* the misfortune to be an heiress."

"This noble candour, Lady Helen," said Oswald, looking with admiration at the spirited girl, "is not flung away upon me, believe me. And I will no longer affect to conceal from you what to a less generous nature I could not say. My father, actuated as much, I verily believe, by admiration of your own high qualities as by any other motive, this morning communicated to me the wishes he has so long cherished. I—I—the fact is, my affections have long been engaged. I represented to him the state of your sentiments towards me—in short, we came to very high words, and separated with a declaration on his part that, unless my addresses were paid to *you*, I need hope for no countenance from him. I left the house in a state little short of desperation, and while on the hill, an expression in a letter of Lucy's suddenly occurred to me, a wish that, to set this matter at rest for both of us, I had but had the chance to be refused by you. Lady Helen, can you forgive me? I came resolved to tell you this, then to make this proposal, just that I might have to say that I had done it in so many words, and had been refused, and then throw myself on your generous kindness for pardon for the unparalleled audacity of such a proceeding.

"I see it—I see it!" burst from the laughing lips of Lady Helen, as her hands were clasped in

irrepressible glee, and all their former smiles and bloom returned to her eyes and cheeks. “It was the brightest thought! Ask my forgiveness! For what? For doing me the highest honour, and yet no more than justice. Oh, thank you—thank you, Mr. Oswald! You have given me something to laugh at, and I never needed it more.”

“Lady Helen,” said Marmaduke, “your goodness is beyond my hopes. You forgive me, then?”

“Forgive! I thank you, Mr. Oswald. Instead of an unwelcome admirer, or rather one whom his friends wanted to make such, you have given me an honest, open-hearted friend, one who is not afraid,” added she, smiling, “to speak the truth to a woman, and an heiress. But now”—her laughing tone changed to one of deep feeling—“I am about to give you the highest proof of my confidence in your honour. I feel bound to give you ample satisfaction to carry to your father. Tell him, then, not only that Helen Grant has refused you, but that if you had loved her as dearly as ever man loved woman, she never could have been your wife.” Her breath came thick and fast, and her ingenuous countenance was dyed in blushes, but she forced herself to proceed. “Since my earliest girlhood I have been attached, and *am* engaged, to a cousin of my own, and I shall either be his wife or the wife of no living man.”

“Lady Helen!” again exclaimed Marmaduke, his keen feelings not less excited than her own, “your noble generosity is too much! I had

no title — none — to be thus received by one who——”

“By one who has learned from your honesty a lesson for which she deeply thanks you,” interrupted Lady Helen. “You have taught me to speak the truth to *my* parents. Sholto and I will no longer act a clandestine part. This very night our engagement shall be avowed, and our fate decided. I shall soon be of age now, but we shall not pass another day in trickery and deceit from which my heart revolts, be the consequences what they will. And now we shall be friends all our lives—shall we not?” She held out her hand with a smile. Oswald respectfully pressed it to his lips as he rose to depart.

“Success attend your suit!” she said, as he quitted the room.

“The same to yours, dear generous girl!” ejaculated Marmaduke to himself. He left the house, and took the nearest path towards the hills, which lay betwixt Burlindean and Cargarth.

It was after eight o’clock, and Mr. Oswald sat at his wine in solitary state, his lady having retired to the drawing-room, where she remained occupied by her embroidery, and many thoughts, principally concerning the contumacy of her son, which thus threatened the demolition of her own and her husband’s pet airy castle. On a sudden, the meditations of both parents were broken by the discharge of a gun outside the house, and in a few minutes after the voice of Marmaduke was

heard speaking, as he ascended the stairs to his own dressing-room.

“ Rogerson!” called out the despairing lover—“ Rogerson, for pity’s sake, get me some dinner directly; I am half famished.”

In a very short time after, the young gentleman, having refreshed his outward man by a change of garments, entered the presence of his offended parent.

“ You are somewhat late, Marmaduke,” drily remarked the latter, as his son seated himself.

“ I have been unavoidably detained, sir,” was the reply. “ I was engaged in fulfilling your commands.”

“ Indeed! May I ask of what nature?”

“ The last you laid upon me, sir. Finding that you made such an indispensable condition of my proposing to Lady Helen, and being pretty well assured what her answer would be, I have been at Burlin Dean, and have made my proposals as directed. But——”

“ The devil you have!” exclaimed Mr. Oswald, amazement and incredulity getting the better of his stateliness.

“ But,” proceeded Marmaduke, “ conceiving it due not less to the young lady than to myself that we should distinctly understand each other, and having no wish to deceive you, sir, as to my proceeding, I must tell you, that previous to making this proposal I fully explained to her the situation in which I was placed, and that it was solely to please you that I did it.”

“Are you mad, sir!” burst forth Mr. Oswald, in a transport of mingled rage and astonishment. “What do you mean! You did not, you durst not, make use of such language to Lady Helen Grant Cochrane?”

“I made use of no language, sir, of which any gentleman need have cause to be ashamed, or with which any lady could be displeased. Lady Helen and I have long been perfectly aware of each other’s sentiments; but without having expressly heard them from her own lips, I found that I could not bring them home to your comprehension. I therefore determined, seeing that nothing else would do, to come to an open explanation with her, and her ready generosity and frankness of spirit met me half way. I have now her own authority for telling you that her affections have been engaged elsewhere for years, and that she never would, or could, have been my wife; so that I trust this will set the matter at rest for ever.”

Amazement, wrath, a thousand mingled and fierce emotions, had kept Mr. Oswald silent till the conclusion of his son’s speech. The revulsion, the sudden influx of truth upon his visions, disclosing their utter emptiness, was too much for his senses to bear—they reeled beneath the mighty shock. But just at the moment when words of thunder were about to break from his lips, as if towhelm the bold contemner of his despotism, the door was flung open by Rogerson and his myrmidons, bearing table-cloth, plates, dishes, knives and forks, and spoons, and all the most

unheroic accompaniments of dinner. It would have been too undignified to pursue the theme under such auspices. Mr. Oswald contented himself with casting at his son a glance of defiance, and muttering, in a low voice, "We shall have some further conversation on this subject, sir," as he strode from the apartment, and left Marmaduke to eat his dinner in solitude.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Oh ! quante volte al tacito
Morir d'un giorno inerte,
Chinati i rai fulminei,
Le braccia al sen conserte,
Stette e dei di che furono
L'assalse il sovvenir !

ALESSANDRO MONTI.

“ And we have won a bower of refuge now
In this fresh waste, the breath of whose repose
Hath cool'd, like dew, the fever of my brow,
And whose green oaks and cedars round me close,
Like temple walls and pillars, that exclude
Earth's haunted dreams from their free solitude.”

MRS. HEMANS.

MONTHS had passed since Guy Clifton's weary watch over his uncle had begun, and produced no change in the state of things described by Mrs. Lavington, except that the poor old man seemed daily to become weaker, and less fit for the fatigue of a voyage home; but, as generally occurs when the intellectual faculties can no longer prey upon the bodily frame, his decay was now slow and lingering. His mind, once of a peculiarly vigorous order, seemed irrecoverably gone, and the

only remaining trace of consciousness in him was his fondness for his nephew. In former times, so great had been the difference in their ways of thinking, that, much as Clifton's warm heart had desired to love, and be loved by, his uncle, he had constantly found himself repelled; and even Mr. Elliott's very kindness had assumed that most grievous form to a sensitive nature, of being prompted by a sense of duty, not by affection. All this was now gone by with the palmy time of prosperity, and the pride of the wealthy citizen; his mind seemed to retain no trace of his calculating days,—he clung to Guy, as Mary had said, and could scarce endure to lose sight of him.

The American friends of Mr. Elliott, who had looked with something of mistrust and coolness upon the refined and cultivated young Englishman, on his first arrival, soon felt these sentiments change into admiration, when they perceived the quiet, simple, unostentatious devotion with which he dedicated himself to watching over his uncle, bearing with all his infirmities, submitting to all his caprices, and willingly relinquishing every pursuit for that of administering to his comfort. No son could more sedulously have guarded the declining days of a beloved father; and without being aware of the extent of the sacrifice which Clifton was making, they regarded with the highest respect his perseverance in these duties. And, in truth, that perseverance was the most admirable feature in the case. Many men are

capable of great sacrifices and generous self-devotion, but it is Christian principle, it is the grace received from above, which alone can enable any one steadily to persist in a course of painful self-denial, and to sacrifice inclination, for a long undefined period, at the shrine of duty. Yet it would be outraging human nature to say that Clifton was not habitually sad, that his daily thought and nightly dream were not fixed on his distant country, and on one dearer than home and country; that he was not sometimes tempted to repine at the life of inaction, the loss of most precious time, the total uncertainty of return, under which he laboured; or that he had not too frequently to lament his own want of reliance on the protecting care of Providence, when he found himself dwelling on the doubts, and fears, and augmented difficulties over-hanging his future career. Those exquisite lines of Monti's, which we have chosen as a motto to this chapter, might but too often have been applied to his meditations; above all, when the sun, sinking over the wide plain of Charlestown, brought that hour more especially consecrated by Nature to sadness and to memory. At such times, wilfully forgetting that the hour of sunset to him was no longer the same as that of home, he would abandon himself to the dreams of the absent and the beloved, which ever crowd upon the heart under its influence, and pour forth his feelings in verse, of which the following lines may be given as a specimen:—

“ Art thou gazing, love, on the glorious sky,
While the soft breath of even floats gently by,
And cometh there not on its quiet sigh—

A voice of the days that are gone ?

Art thou musing, perchance, by the lonely sea,
Where its foam-tipp'd billows break restlessly,—
And dwelleth there not a thought with thee
Of visions flown ?

“ I know that thine eye will seek the west,
When the Day-God's coursers are boune to their rest
And flooded with radiance, old Ocean's breast

Retains the departing light.

Oh, then, let the lamp of memory east
One gleam back on pleasures that faded fast !
Oh, breathe then one sigh to sunsets past !

They, too, were bright.

“ For in that west is a heart that sighs
For the vanish'd light of thy gentle eyes,
And sadly 'neath morning's and evening's skies,

Dreams of the past and thee !

Then—then, in the calm of this soothing hour,
The pale Bride of Night, with her ample dower
Of spells, that over the spirit have power,
Remember me !”

The extremely dangerous tendency of the climate, on the sea-coast of South Carolina, during the hot months of summer, induced Clifton to remove his uncle to a short distance, for his strength would admit of no more, at that season. They went towards the high country of the province, to the neighbourhood of one of those rising villages, which are starting up everywhere, as if by magic, in the very bosom of the American wilderness. Here, about the beginning of October, they were visited by Mr. Layton, the friend already mentioned, who insisted on Clifton's leaving his uncle to his care for a few days, and making a short excursion in the neighbourhood—

rightly divining, that the constant confinement to which he was subjected, together with the effects of the climate, were beginning to tell upon his health. Feeling this to be the case, and perceiving that having a new person to talk to, seemed to render his uncle indifferent to his presence, Clifton gratefully accepted the offer—the more willingly, as it enabled him to put in practice a scheme which had long dwelt upon his mind. This was no other than to set on foot some inquiries after the fate of his great-uncle, Rowland.

It will be remembered, that such had already been made, without a shadow of success, upon the bequest of Gerald Clifton to his brother becoming known ; and so many years had since elapsed, that Guy could not but feel it a chimerical idea, which seemed to urge him to prosecute them. Still it dwelt upon his mind—the story had always possessed a peculiar interest for him ; and although he had no expectation of learning that his unfortunate relative still survived, he felt that it would be a satisfaction to the whole family, as well as to himself, to be able to trace out the close of his career. His opportunities for inquiry on the subject had hitherto been very few ; but having repeatedly mentioned it to Mr. Layton, that gentleman now recollected that there was a family, of Irish descent, in Fayetteville, who might, though he could not tell, have some knowledge respecting those of their countrymen who had figured in the rebellion ; from whom, in short, some light

might be struck out, to cast at least a reflected radiance on the fate of one who had been well known to many of the actors in that tragic scene. To Fayetteville, accordingly, Clifton directed his steps, being provided with several introductions by his friend.

It would be tedious, as well as unnecessary, to dwell upon his various inquiries there, unattended as they were by the slightest satisfaction. A very few days were all that he would allow himself to profit by the kindness of the hospitable North Carolinians—his time was limited; and, baffled in his object here, he determined to devote his remaining period of liberty to penetrating still further west, to the Alleghany range, moved thereto by the dreams which most lovers of nature have dreamt, of “the eternal forests of the Western World.” Accompanied, therefore, by the faithful Faust, the inseparable companion of his wanderings, who had crossed the Atlantic along with him, Clifton took his seat in one of the *stages*, which, in America, are to be found penetrating the very heart of the forest, wherever there is anything in the shape of a road to admit them; and having proceeded in it as far west as he judged advisable, he took up his abode for a couple of days at one of those inns, or rather houses of refreshment, kept by settlers, which are the only inns to be found among the outposts of civilization in the southern states. At the period of this tale, it will be borne in mind, that districts which now can boast of thriving towns and immense population, were still nearly unexplored,

and settled only by a very few people; and Clifton now found himself in one where the traces of man's inroads upon the forest were comparatively few and far between.

During his first evening at the inn, he heard much talk of an inhabitant of this district, whose plantation lay some miles farther on, who was said to have been one of the very first settlers in those parts, and was believed to have originally come from "the old country." This planter, whose name was Hammond, appeared, from all that Clifton could gather, to lead a singularly secluded life, and to be altogether of a different stamp from those around him; consequently, to be the subject of not a little wonder and animadversion. His curiosity was strongly excited by all that he heard, and by the mention of the "Old Country;" and his thoughts full of one topic, he caught himself wondering whether by any possibility he could contrive to meet with this recluse, and if it were within the bounds of chance that he might obtain from him some of the information which he sought. Accident, as it happened, favoured this wish in a very singular manner.

On the following day, Clifton, having provided himself with certain landmarks of the road, set off on a pedestrian excursion to the forest, followed as usual by Faust. Released from the painful restraints of the last few months, his very heart felt lighter, as he plunged into the sublime solitudes which man had not yet had time wholly to desecrate. He had not, for many

a long day, experienced so complete a revival of all the lofty and exalting thoughts which belong to an unrestrained communing with solitary nature. After some hours' rambling, he had reached a deep stream, or creek, as it is called in that country, just at the spot where, rushing with impetuosity round the base of a lofty bank of rock, covered with trees, which were festooned with mosses and gigantic creepers, it flung itself over a steep descent, and formed a dark pool beneath, whence its waters more slowly wound towards another angle of the rocky bank, by which its farther course was presently concealed. The banks on the rocky side, whence Clifton viewed it, were still in all the untouched magnificence of nature; but on the other, from the point where he stood, he could perceive signs of *clearing* among the woods, though not near enough to interrupt the repose and seclusion of the scene. He remained for a considerable time gazing down upon the water, then advanced to the very edge of the rock overhanging the pool, to look more closely at a gigantic tree, hung with garlands of bright-coloured creepers, which stretched its massive limbs across the stream. It so chanced, that at this particular spot, the rock had been undermined by the floods of the stream beneath; it was naturally of a soft and crumbling consistency, and suddenly gave way beneath the pressure of Clifton's foot. Ere he could recover his balance, he was precipitated from a considerable height into the deep black water below.

The height from which he fell sent him far beneath the surface of the eddying pool; and though a practised swimmer, this was a place where swimming could have availed him little, when entangled in the stifling and whirling fall. His life would therefore, in all probability, have paid the forfeit of his rashness, but for the assistance of Faust. The animal had strayed to some little distance, at the time of his master's accident, and it was not till about five minutes after that he came galloping up to the spot. Clifton's large straw-hat, whirling in the midst of the eddies, directed the attention of the sagacious dog to the precise place where he had disappeared. He instantly plunged into the water, dived beneath the surface, and, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in dragging his master by the collar of his coat up the opposite bank, which sloped easily to the stream. He was by this time totally insensible; and Faust, after standing over him for an instant, and uttering a long melancholy howl, snuffed the air, then galloped off at full speed in the direction of the road that intersected the forest. Just at this time, there came jolting along this road one of those odd, lumbering, creaking vehicles, which, in that part of the world, were denominated carriages, driven by a stout negro, and containing an elderly man, in a planter's dress and straw-hat, who, attracted by the unusual cries and gestures of the dog, directed his charioteer to stop, and followed him to the spot where Clifton lay. Perceiving what had happened, the planter bent over him, raised,

and supported him in his arms ; then shouting to his attendant, that sable functionary left his horse, and came to his master's assistance, and between them they bore him to the carriage. The planter then getting in to support him, they drove off as rapidly as the nature of the road would admit.

“ I almost fear he is dead,” was his soliloquy, as he placed his hand on the heart of Clifton, and could perceive no pulsation. In doing so, his own sleeve caught in the clasp of a little book of tablets, which fell, open, from Clifton's waist-coat pocket. The planter took it up, and his eye fixed on the name of the owner, written in the first leaf. The book dropped from his hand, he raised Clifton's head from his shoulder, put aside from his forehead the heavy masses of wet hair, and examined his pale and lifeless features with a long and earnest gaze, then gently suffering him once more to rest against that support, called out to the negro, in a hoarse and agitated voice, imploring him to drive faster, if possible.

They had now got into a tract of cleared country, and a somewhat better road, bordered by cotton plantations and fields of Indian corn, very shortly brought them to a gate, which admitted them, by an avenue of chesnut trees, to the house of the planter—a small and low-roofed building, surrounded by a verandah, which was covered with luxuriant creeping plants. Clifton was carried into the house, closely followed by Faust, and the means used for his restoration

were, after some little time, attended with success.

It might be about three hours afterwards that he awoke from a profound sleep, to find himself lying in bed, in a room wholly unknown to him. The first thing which brought to his recollection the accident that had occurred, was the sight of poor Faust, sitting close by him—a position which it was evident he had occupied ever since his arrival, from the moisture which had flowed from his shaggy coat upon the floor.

“Faust!” exclaimed Clifton, raising himself to look round the room, as the animal thrust his head close to him, whining and wagging his tail, “wie geht’s, alter Freund? And where are we, Faust, I wonder?”

At that moment the door opened, and admitted his host, who, approaching him with the kindest inquiries after his health, announced himself, to Clifton’s equal amazement and pleasure, as the Mr. Hammond of whom he had heard so much on the previous day, and gave him an account of the accident by which he had been enabled to rescue him from death, at the same time insisting, in a manner which admitted of no denial, that he should remain with him that night. Clifton, in fact, felt little disposed to resist his urgency, for there was an indefinable something about the planter’s manner which strongly attracted him, and rendered him desirous of seeing more of one who was evidently no common man. In person, he was tall and commanding, his hair

was long and white as snow, giving a venerable aspect to features which must once have been singularly fine, and still were expressive in no common degree ; and his dark penetrating eyes, bent with a gaze of somewhat mournful earnestness on the countenance of his young guest, seemed as if they would read his very soul. The grace and dignity of manner, not less than the English accent, of this remarkable man, at once indicated that his days could not all have passed in the back woods. In announcing himself to Clifton, he had incidentally mentioned himself as an Irishman, and this circumstance in an instant re-awakened all Guy's hopes respecting his uncle Rowland. Just as he was meditating how to introduce the subject, Mr. Hammond, who had taken a chair by his bed-side, recommending him not to quit it for a little while, anticipated his intention.

Restoring to him the book of tablets already mentioned, and informing him how he had learnt his name from it, the planter fixed his eyes on him for a moment, and said, in a low voice—“Are you a son of Arthur, Lord Clifton de Pevenley?”

“I am his nephew,” replied Clifton, in amazement. “Is it possible that——”

“I knew,” interrupted the planter—“I knew I could not be mistaken. Years have passed since I have seen an English face, or heard an English voice, and the first that meet me are those of a Clifton ! I recognised, in an instant, the stamp of the race ;—there is no mistaking them. I had

once, many—many years ago, young man, a friend of your name—of your family."

"Can it be possible," exclaimed Clifton, "that my hopes are now to be fulfilled? Tell me, I entreat you, what was his name?"

"You can have no hopes," returned the planter, "connected with *his* name; I question if you can ever have heard it; it was one that was blotted from the memories of all his family, and ceased to be spoken in the house of his father. His name was *Rowland Clifton*."

The astonishment and delight of Clifton may be conceived. To have thus, in a manner so fortuitous, so extraordinary, so removed from the every-day incidents of life, been brought into contact with one who might, perchance, be able to solve doubts so long abandoned, as inexplicable, and who, at all events, had actually known the relative in whom he felt so deep an interest, seemed more like a vision than reality. He could scarce find words to express his feelings.

"You *have* heard of him, then?" asked Hammond, again fixing his eyes on his companion's face. "You heard of him, doubtless, as an outcast deserving of his doom—a rebel—a traitor to his principles—a—"

"You judge his family most harshly," eagerly replied Clifton. "Not even from my uncle did I ever hear him thus spoken of. The days of political excitement are long since past,* and a

* The reader will bear in mind that these words were spoken, "Consule Tullo,"—"in our hot youth, when George the Fourth was King." We, alas! can no longer say the same.

feeling of sorrow—a consciousness that he was, in some respects, most cruelly dealt by—are all that any of the survivors of that generation now entertain. Can you—will you—tell me the sequel of his story? You know not with what anxiety it has been attempted to trace it."

"I cannot," replied Hammond, slowly and solemnly. "I do not wish to deceive you, my young friend; I *could* tell you much that you do not know, but I am bound by a solemn promise not to do so, and that promise you must not ask me to break. But of one thing you may safely assure your family, Rowland Clifton is no more, and it is well. What had one, whose career terminated like his, what had he to do with existence?"

"I trust in God," said Clifton, "you do not mean to infer that he died by his own hand!"

"No," replied the planter, in a tone of solemn sincerity; "from that last and deadliest sin he was preserved. Further, I must not tell you."

"And why?" exclaimed Clifton—"why say that he, or any man, let his fate have been the darkest that ever befel a living being, had no more to do with existence? Let us humbly hope and trust that he lived to recognise the true end of existence—to reconcile himself to the God who gave it."

"You believe, then," said his companion, "that a heart which had so erred—which had been seared and burnt in such a furnace of affliction and misery, could repent and soften, and bring itself to endure life again?"

"As firmly I believe it," said Guy, "as I believe the Spirit of God—his power—his pardoning mercy—the efficacy of the atonement made for all sin, to be illimitable; as surely as I know that faith can reconcile man to tarry God's good time for release, were it from the darkest dungeon of misery."

The old man looked in silence on the face of his young guest, glowing, as it was, with the enthusiasm which inspired his words, then held out his hand, and grasped that of Clifton with a strong pressure. He did not reply to him for several minutes; when he did, it was with the calm voice of one who has learned to suppress all outward trace of emotion.

"It is indeed, my young friend, a wonderful thing to look back upon the passage of many years, and to perceive how gradually we have been suited and fitted in, as it were, to changes in our destiny the most complete, the most bitter—those which we should once have fancied the least endurable. I have told you that I was the early friend of your uncle. I shared in too many of his follies, of his sins; my youth, like his, was conversant with courts, and camps, and the busiest haunts of men—the close of life finds me a recluse in the wilds of America. Yes, Mr. Clifton, you are right; there *is* a power which can reconcile even men, who have erred and suffered as we both did, to await the end with patience. Mine, like Rowland's, has been a dark and eventful history; let us trust that he found, before its close, what I have done, that after the

whirlwind, and the storm, and the wasting fire have passed away, 'the still small voice' comes to us in the cave."

Inexpressibly interested in this singular man, and tantalized by thus receiving a glimpse of his uncle's fate, and being denied any further insight into it, Clifton renewed his entreaties for elucidation of the mystery, and finally disclosed to his host the chief cause of the anxiety of the Clifton family on the subject, and the melancholy end of Gerald. He did not succeed in his object, but the effect produced by the history of Gerald's will, and his remorse, was very remarkable. The planter kept his head turned from him during the recital, but not so entirely as to conceal the working of his features as if through strong emotion, nor was it until the tale had been many minutes ended that he spoke again to question him more minutely on the subject. He made no comments on it, but once again, ere he left his guest, requested to hear its particulars repeated, then abruptly quitted the room.

He reverted to it once more in the evening, when Clifton and he were seated in the verandah, with Faust at his master's feet, enjoying the beams of a glorious full moon. Again Clifton found himself required to detail the particulars of his Uncle Gerald's fate, and his dying bequest, but found likewise that his own attempts at any solution of the mystery regarding Rowland were doomed to frustration. It was evident that, over the portion of Hammond's life, connected with that unfortunate individual, he was resolved to draw an

impenetrable veil. Clifton could not help suspecting, from various dark hints which he dropped, that he had been implicated in the Irish rebellion, only that there was no trace of political enthusiasm in the calm and philosophical repose of the old man's manner; and while reserved as to his own story, there was a degree of parental kindness towards his young guest that irresistibly won upon his confidence. This, it was evident, was Hammond's wish. He drew Clifton on to speak of his own early history, then gradually succeeded in extracting from him a narrative, as brief as he could render it, of the cause of his voyage to America. The old man listened attentively, and seemed powerfully affected, whilst it was evident that his ready comprehension supplied those gaps which the delicacy of Clifton left in the tale, more especially when questioning him as to his unfortunate engagement, a portion of it which the latter would willingly have left untold, but to which the sight of the locket suspended round his neck, displayed in the course of the efforts used to restore him to life that morning, had apparently furnished his new and singular friend with a clue which he was determined to follow up. When he had at length succeeded in obtaining the information he required, he was silent a little space, then again he grasped the hand of his guest, and shook it as he had done on a former occasion. "Mr. Clifton," said he, "I thank you from my soul! You have recalled to the mind of an old and heart-withered man his earlier and better impressions of human

nature. Would that we had known each other sooner, or had had the prospect of a longer acquaintance! Tell me, can you not remain with me here some little time?"

"I need not say," returned Clifton, "how willingly—how joyfully I should do so, were it consistent with the simple act of duty to which your goodness gives praise it so little deserves. But having explained my situation, I am sure you will agree with me that I ought not to indulge my own wishes in this respect, strongly as they second your kindness."

"I believe you are right—quite right," replied Hammond. "It is, however, an admission which causes me more melancholy than I could have believed my heart still capable of feeling. To a soul like mine, the contact with a youthful spirit such as yours is like a fountain in the desert. But return to the duties to which you have so devotedly bound yourself; God forbid that mine should be the hand to hold you back! Only this, my young friend, you must promise me—before you quit America, you must return and visit me again. This request I trust you will not refuse."

Clifton, with much emotion, gave the required promise. It would, indeed, have been most painful to him to think that, in parting with this singular being, he was bidding him an everlasting farewell; besides that he clung to the hope of yet gaining, through his means, some clue to the fate of his uncle. It cheered him, when on the morrow he took leave of his host in the forest, into which

the latter had convoyed him, to remember that they should meet again.

The planter returned to his solitary abode, musing on "the various turns of fate below," while Clifton wended his lonely way from the scene of adventures so unexpected, with the faithful Faust, the sole companion of his path.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Ich hab’ gelernt verlieren und entbehren.”

F. GRILLPARZER.

“ All day within the dreamy house,

Old faces peeped about the doors—
Old footsteps trod the upper floors—
Old voices called her from without.
Then said she, ‘ I am very dreary,
He cometh not,’ she said.
She said, ‘ I am aweary—aweary,
I would that I were dead.’ ”

ALFRED TENNYSON.

It is to be presumed that Aunt Elizabeth’s letter has sufficiently enlightened the sagacious reader as to the proceedings of our heroine after the departure of Clifton; as, also, to the estimation in which they caused her character to be held by her relations. Time was when the very marked manner in which this was shewn, would have made a painful impression upon Eleanor’s mind; but the poet has told us of one who suffered from a great and unforgotten sorrow—that, in after-life,

“ Fortune threw many a thorn in his way,
Which, true to one anguish, he trod without feeling.”

And this is the case with many whom the world

esteems cold and indifferent. Eleanor bore it all with calmness, partly for this reason, but still more from another and a higher cause. In the school of private and silent suffering, she learned the usefulness of trials such as she had been called upon to bear; and we cannot recognise our own innate sinfulness, and our need of chastisement, without becoming lenient to the faults of others, and acquiring grace to forgive those they have committed against ourselves. Eleanor's tears, and her bitter thoughts, were for her private hours alone: to outward view there was no change in her demeanour. Even to her mother—and that was the hardest task of all—she never had permitted herself a reproachful look, or a word which Mrs. Falconar and her advisers might construe into contempt for her authority.

Yet the most unfortunate amongst us—did they but reflect as deeply on their mercies as on their sufferings—must, it is certain, feel humbled by the view such reflections would give them of the unmerited kindness of Heaven. There never has been a period of grief or distress in any of our lives, which has not also brought with it its own consolations, slight it may be, and of brief continuance, yet sufficient to redeem it from the charge of being all invariably dark and gloomy. Often, while reading and re-reading the letters which she received from the kind-hearted and gentle cousin of Guy Clifton, did Eleanor acknowledge the mercy which had vouchsafed her this exchange for the dreadful and heart-wearing anxiety which must have been her portion had

she never heard anything concerning him. And at home, besides the love which united her to that affectionate and cheerful sister, who never spoke but to breathe of hope, there were some human beings near who felt deeply for her. Besides the excellent and warm-hearted Richardsons, there was Miss Hay, who was more frequently than ever with her beloved young friends; and, while she never forced a confidence, there was something in the gentle maternal tenderness and sympathy of her manner, and in the way in which she constantly alluded to Guy, which went directly to Eleanor's heart. If Emily Hay could have spoken on such a subject to the daughter of Douglas Falconar, she could have told her that there are pangs in this world far more intense and difficult to bear than those of lovers, who, though separated, continue to love as fondly and as truly as ever, and who can fearlessly rely on each other's constancy. She could have told her a tale of the blight of early affections—the desolation of a heart, which, in hopeless solitude, must teach itself to forget—the vain hauntings of remembrance, after the living reality of love has long been departed. But though she could not tell her of these things, she could yet impart to her the consolation which a young heart finds in sympathy, and this she most fully did.

It is to be hoped that the gentle reader feels some interest in the situation in which this narrative left "the pensive Marmaduke?" It will please him, we trust, to learn, that after a tough engagement, victory declared for that young gen-

tleman. The resistance made by Mr. Oswald had more reference to Lady Helen than to Clara. The momentous and incredible truth of the former young lady's attachment to her cousin, required some time ere it could work its way into his brain, or that of his lady—those storehouses of knowledge having previously been filled by a conviction of her passion for Marmaduke. It was not, therefore, until, three days after Marmaduke's *coup d'état*, Mr. Oswald received a morning visit from Lord Rossiewood, brimful of this very subject, that the actual state of the case dawned upon his benighted soul. And, to the day of his death, it may safely be doubted whether he ever brought himself to believe in the authenticity of Marmaduke's account of his proposal to Lady Helen. It remained for him one of those incomprehensible truths to which we yield an outward assent, seeing that we have no means of impugning the evidence on which they rest; but which our spirits never do, and never can, fully take in and imbibe. One reason of this was, that Lord Rossiewood made no mention of it. The generous Lady Helen had kept Marmaduke's counsel, knowing that her parents might not regard the trust he had reposed in her in the same light which she did. She told nobody's love but her own. And Lord Rossiewood merely called on the day in question to pour his disappointment into the ears of his old friend; and little dreaming what a tender chord he touched, to recount the particulars of the confession; and how his lady and he had held

out for two days, but at last had yielded to the prayers of the lovers, and consented that the marriage should take place on Helen's attaining her majority. Mr. Oswald listened to the tale in a state of mind between despair and offended dignity, but without any outward betrayal of his feelings ; and on his noble friend's departure, beginning to reflect how particularly agreeable it would be, should any of the late transactions get abroad in the county, and exhibit him in the ludicrous light they must infallibly do, he sent for Marmaduke, and pronounced with much stateliness, his fiat of assent to his proposing for Clara. The blow was softened to the parents by the circumstance of her being a member of that ancient family, to whose possessions they had succeeded, by right of purchase. To the son, the consent brought unmitigated rapture ; and, within an hour after receiving it, he was on his way to Edinburgh.

Three days after, the news of the young laird's intended marriage reached Cargarth, whence it spread like wildfire over that country. Sholto Drummond learned it on the moors, where Adie Walkinshaw received it from Peter MacMurdo, who had now attained a key to his young master's extravagances ; and the warm-hearted young soldier, leaving little Lord Lintrose *planté* on the hill, flew home to tell his betrothed, who actually danced for joy on hearing the intelligence. Mr. Brisbane, who was still a guest at Mosspatrick, sallying forth on a wet afternoon to take a constitutional walk in the avenue, before dinner, met

Eben Mackittrick, Mr. Balmayne's grieve, who promulgated to him the same tale, as he had that instant heard it from Tam Howison, on his way past the gate with a cart. Enjoying the idea of his dear friend, Mrs. Balmayne's, discomfiture, Mr. Brisbane sped back to the house, and announced the match in full divan, with his usual "ha, ha!"

Mr. Balmayne cordially and unaffectedly declared his pleasure in the news; avowed that it was what he had always expected from the first, and was "delighted to think that young Oswald would now most likely settle in the county, which would be a great advantage to the neighbourhood, as he had a very clear head for country business." Mrs. Balmayne coloured scarlet, and snapped her netting-thread three times over, while announcing it as her opinion, that Clara Falconar was a great deal too young. "A very serious undertaking indeed at eighteen; and I know she's not nineteen yet."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Brisbane, "my dear madam, that is a defect that is always mending."

"Oh, to be sure, Mr. Brisbane, if her mother likes to let her marry out of the nursery, it's no other body's business; and, certainly, they must all think a match like that not to be sneezed at. They had no right to look for anything of the kind, for these girls have little or nothing. But I must say, for my share, I think Mr. Marmaduke has a temper of his own. It wont be every wife that can manage *him*!"

"Ha, ha! I think she had better not try, in-

deed, Mrs. Balmayne. Tom, what do you think of your pretty cousin's marriage, eh?"

"Faith!" responded the youth, "she's known what she was about—played her cards devilish well! They say old Oswald's as rich as a Jew."

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose I needn't appeal to *you*, Miss Balmayne? Of course you won't approve, as you think Oswald 'so ugly?'"

"Oh, Mr. Brisbane," exclaimed his hostess, with an agonizing laugh, "you're really so funny!"

Poor Agnes had not forgotten with whom she had been contrasting Oswald, on the day when she had made the declaration of which she was thus reminded,—and the tears gushed into her eyes as she replied, in a very low voice, that "she daresay'd it was a very nice marriage." Mr. Brisbane perceived the pain he had inflicted and guessed at its cause, which afforded him matter for a mental "Ha, ha! Poor girl!"

It is needless to say with what delight the news of this marriage was hailed by the Cargarth tenantry and cottars, and by the minister. That unsophisticated person thought of the *man* and of the young lady, not of the *match*. But it is reasonable to conclude that those whose fancies dwelt on the latter subject enjoyed a double proportion of happiness, since we all know the superiority of money to love. Accordingly, the emotions of Mrs. Falconar, even although she did feel herself not a little injured at first, in never having had it pointed out to her that Marmaduke was in love with Clara, were infinitely

better worth noticing than those of Eleanor. And, on the same principle, who would waste a thought on the image of the two sisters alternately smiling and weeping in each other's arms, when he might dwell on the rapture and the added dignity of Aunt Annie and Aunt Elizabeth?

They, indeed, *were* happy. Innumerable were the beauties and perfections wherewith their niece was immediately endowed; many the discoveries of how "they had always foretold that Clara would *make a good match*; there was something about her so superior to Eleanor!" Aunt Elizabeth directly sat down to write to Mrs. Livingstone, and Martha got into disgrace more dire than she had ever before done, and was not forgiven for three days, because, on being told of the marriage by Aunt Annie, she exclaimed, moved alike by the love of justice and the spirit of contradiction—"Ay, ay, Miss Annie, is't the lad Oswald Miss Claura's to get? I seed him ae day at Mistress Falc'nars. My certy, he's no bonny! The lad that coortit Miss Eellen was a hantle better fa'ard, but ye was a' thrawn aneuch till him, just 'cause he wantit the siller!" And thereupon Mrs. Martha, in a cracked and discordant voice, began to chant "Tibbie Fowler."

Mr. Peter Balmayne rejoiced in spirit that "the girl was not a d——d fool like her sister," shook her cordially by the hand the first time they met, and superintended her marriage settlements with the solicitude of twenty guardians rolled into one. Mrs. Peter waxed more and more gracious and affectionate, as each succeeding

day brought deeper and deeper conviction of the greatness and goodness of "the match." Congratulatory letters, every one more tender than another, poured in from every friend and relation far and near, till Clara averred that she had never till then formed the slightest conception of her own amiable qualities, or the intense interest which she had inspired in people who had hitherto disguised their feelings so well as to have appeared most philosophically indifferent to her. Splendid sets of ornaments, and beautiful bijouterie of all sorts, were daily making their appearance as offerings to the bride, and some honorary distinctions of a very satisfactory nature were conferred upon her in the shape of visits from Mrs. Charles Forbes Graham, Lady Glenmarley, and Lady Susan,—the last-named event hitherto unprecedented,—and a confidential communication from Grace Moray to Eleanor, to the effect that Anthony Wellwood had declared that he thought Clara quite beautiful—very like Lady Patricia Malcolm!

Eleanor, meanwhile,—though nobody but Clara, Marmaduke, and Miss Hay, thought of her feelings, or of the absent Clifton,—was too much engrossed by her sister's happiness to bestow more than a passing thought—a sigh for what *might* have been—upon her own concerns. She had the comfort of seeing Clara affectionately received by the relations of her future husband; she had the utmost confidence in Marmaduke's heart and principles, and, in short, she endeavoured to forget that she must lose her darling

sister, and to think only of the happy prospects awaiting the latter. But when all was fairly over, and the excitement which for the last few weeks had supported her spirits, as well as the necessity for exertion were over too, then indeed did Eleanor feel bereaved and desolate, and long was it ere she could retire any night to rest in the now solitary apartment which Clara and she had shared together, without shedding bitter tears.

Nothing, indeed, could be more sad and dismal than the house, nothing more deserted than Eleanor felt herself to be, and as the season of the year which had witnessed her brother's death was now approaching, her heart became doubly oppressed with sadness. Just at this time she was invited to accompany her mother on a visit to Ferneylee. There was much that was painful in the idea of revisiting that place, but mingled with a certain degree of mournful pleasure, and, at all events, Eleanor felt it, just then, a relief to escape from home and its memories.

Ferneylee she found, indeed, a contrast to its aspect at that time two years ago. The party only consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone, Aunt Annie, her mother, and Captain Cousins—a quiet, acquiescent nonentity. Even Aunt Elizabeth was on a visit at Woodsideshaw. The absence of Bob's light-hearted mirth made a woful blank in the house, and the shrouded harp and closed piano-forte of his lovely sisters were dismal to look upon; whilst Eleanor—as she traversed the quiet apartments, or walked in the

still and lonely pleasure-grounds, with her own feelings imparting their mournful colour to all surrounding objects,—could have thought that the place had been depopulated by a succession of domestic calamities. Not a step could she take that images of the past did not come crowding upon her again. There was the dear terrace, where she had walked with Alfred, and where she first had met with Guy ; there the room where they had acted the charades ; there the window whence, on the morning of their departure, she had watched her brother and Clifton walking below. So vivid was the impression of that moment, that, in looking from it, she could have fancied that she beheld them still, and yet one was in his grave, and the other an exile beyond the wide Atlantic.

With that fond superstition of the heart, to which all who love are prone, Eleanor did not visit the well-remembered seat by the river-side, until the 24th of October. That day at length arrived, and she remained in her own apartment the greater portion of the morning, for the thoughts connected with its last anniversary were too agonizing to allow her to mingle with those below ; then, in the afternoon, she stole from the house, and traced her solitary path through the shrubbery to the river side.

All was unaltered there. The rustic sofa stood as she had last beheld it, on the soft green turf beneath the tree. There grew the tuft of prim-roses, covered, as formerly, with pale, sweet blos-soms ; there flowed the lovely river—oh, how

truly “unlike the tide of human time!” Eleanor sank upon the seat and raised her eyes to the sky, which was covered with pale, grey, mottled clouds. She had last seen it clear in its own heavenly blue, and silvered by the moonlight, but, in all other respects the scene was the same. She could almost have fancied that she heard the deep, low music of Clifton’s voice stealing upon her ear once more. His picture was in her hand, and she gazed upon it till the speaking eye seemed lighted up by the smile which was wont to render them so beautiful. Suddenly a withered leaf stole with a gentle rustling from one of the boughs above her, and touched her cheek as it fell. It brought to her recollection the grave of Alfred, on which the autumnal leaves were now falling, and with that thought a torrent of tears and sobs relieved the dull weight within her breast, and soothed at least, if it could not console, the bitterness of her lonely sorrow.

At length she rose, gathered a tuft of the primroses,—still her memorial of that day,—pressed them to her lips, and placed them near her heart, then, with another long look on wood and river, turned and pursued her path to the house through groves that no longer echoed to one of the many joyous voices which had filled them on that day two years before.

CHAPTER XX.

“ One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
Through the dark medium of life’s feverish dream,
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part, perhaps, what mortals deem :
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
Oh, then, renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies !
For thou art but of dust—be humble and be wise.”

BEATTIE.

“ And neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone !
. Stranger, pass
Softly ! to save the contrite, Jesus bled.”

WORDSWORTH.

THE beginning of another year found Guy Clifton still the unwearied attendant of his uncle ; but the period of this attendance was now approaching a close. Slowly, but surely, death was dealing with the old man ; and in the middle of June, he was again attacked by fever, which, in a few days, brought him to the grave.

On the evening when he died, Clifton was sit-

ting by his bed-side, watching an uneasy slumber into which he had fallen. He had never quitted him by day or night, but not a single token of recognition had given him any hope that consciousness had returned to the departing spirit. Now, as his eyes were mournfully fixed on the pale, attenuated, and corpse-like form before him, his uncle suddenly awoke, looked up, as he bent over him, and exclaimed—"My God! Mortimer Clifton!"

It sounded like a voice from the dead invoking the dead. "No," said Guy, gently; "it is I—it is your nephew, Guy."

"Guy!" said the dying man. "Yes; I remember now. Mary," he added, making a feeble effort to look round—"Mary is not here, nor Henry Lavington?"

"They are not," answered Clifton; "they could not come."

"I remember," again repeated his uncle. "There has been a cloud over me—but it is past. You will take my—my blessing to them, Guy? and my blessing be with you, my good boy! You have done more than the duty of a son by me. I would fain—I would fain have had a little time to prepare—" A convulsive spasm cut short the words. He never spoke again, and within two hours he was a corpse. The soul which had in this life received its good things, and thought but little of the provision for another, fled to its dread account without preparation.

Clifton felt the death of his uncle very deeply,

as a warm heart must, after having for a long period devoted time and thoughts to any one, and with a woful sense of the contrast between his life and his death scene. Many commercial arrangements, consequent on his death, with the Charlestown correspondents of the firm, devolved on his nephew, who willingly undertook them, in order to smooth away, if possible, some of Henry Lavington's difficulties ; and thus, awaiting instructions from the latter, and engaged in the details of business, the middle of August was near at hand, ere he found himself ready to depart.

At last, his duties were concluded, and he was beginning to think of a visit to his singular friend in North Carolina, as a final preliminary to his quitting the States, when one day a letter was brought to him, directed in a hand totally unknown, and sealed, to his utter amazement, with the crest of his own family. He tore it open, glanced at the signature, and, if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, he could not have dropped the paper in more uncontrollable agitation. "Dolt! idiot that I was," he exclaimed, "not to have guessed this before!"

The letter was signed—" *Rowland Fitz-Hammond Clifton!*"

LETTER OF ROWLAND CLIFTON.

" I can imagine the astonishment with which the young guest of a solitary settler in the Western States of America will learn, that by the myste-

rious direction of Providence, his steps have been guided to the dwelling of one of his own race, after whom so many and such persevering inquiries have hitherto been made in vain. When we met, my dear young friend, I could not at first have disclosed to you the identity of the planter, Hammond, and him who I truly told you was no more; for the Rowland Clifton of your uncle's memory has long ceased to exist—long ago renounced his name, and endeavoured to forget his descent. It would have required no ordinary effort on my part to have made myself known to one of my own family; yet, strongly attracted towards you, as I felt, from the first moment, I believe I could hardly have parted from you without making that effort, had it not been for your momentous disclosure respecting the last bequest of my brother. On the feelings with which I listened to your narrative of his sufferings, his remorse, I cannot enlarge. Had I not long since learned the habit of sternly controlling the outward expression of any emotion, I must then have betrayed myself—God forbid, my beloved nephew, that you should ever be able to guess at what they were! May the fearful pang ever be averted from you, of experiencing treachery from the friend, the companion, the dear playmate of infancy! I will not dwell upon it; I have been avenged, by the hand of God himself—not man. But I can only say—May the Judge of all have forgiven the sins of my erring brother as freely, as fully, as entirely, as

I had forgiven them, long ere I knew that he had lived to become sensible of their guilt!

“ The tidings of the inheritance which Gerald had left to me, valueless as it respected myself—for, in my own person, I never should have claimed it—assumed a deep interest for me, when I learned your history, and discovered the generous sacrifice you had made of worldly interest to duty. In order to avail myself of the means this bestowed of rewarding your virtue, a terrible struggle was necessary; but at last, my better nature was enabled to prevail. I need not dwell on particulars, which you will learn from your uncle, Lord Clifton, on your return. Suffice it to say, that I bent my stubborn pride to what nothing but such a motive ever would have induced me to do. I disclosed myself to him, to Arthur Clifton, my early friend, by letter—furnished him with indisputable proofs of my identity—and, binding him and his legal advisers to a solemn pledge of secrecy, until I should give them liberty to inform any one else of my existence, announced my will that you, as my adopted heir, should succeed to the accumulated property left me. I have lately learned from him, that on your return home, you will find your claims acknowledged by the trustees appointed by Gerald; and that you will succeed, without opposition, to a fortune sufficient to render you as independent and happy as you deserve to be. I did not choose to disclose myself till all this was arranged. But it is well the tidings have been delayed no

longer, for I am ill. I feel that the hand of death is on me; and lest you may be prevented obeying my earnest summons in time, I hasten to tell you this while I may. But I would fain see you, Guy, ere I depart. In the pride and vigour of manhood, strong resolution, and a deep sense of resentment and injury, could reconcile me to living and dying unknown to any human being, in whose veins a drop of my blood flowed; but now, partly because the sight of you has recalled me to the softer thoughts belonging to early days, partly because the soul, ere quitting her earthly dwelling, fulfils the mysterious round of existence, by returning to the thoughts and feelings which marked her first essay in the world, I long to look upon your face again. I would not willingly expire as I have lived, apart from all who belong to my race and name. In you I have found what I never hoped to see—one bearing the name of Clifton, yet not a slave to worldliness—one capable of appreciating the characters, even while he blamed the errors, of those who sinned through misdirected enthusiasm. It was their worldliness which first disgusted me with my own family, and drove me to act upon conclusions as rash as they were mistaken. From that stain you have proved yourself free. I have found in your character that proportion of the exalted and enthusiastic, without which no man is, in my opinion, worthy of much regard, combined with a strength of virtuous resolve, such as is rarely met with. Come to me, then, Guy, that

I may bless you ere I go hence—that one of my own kin may lay my head in the dust!

“ You may be detained by your present duties, or you may arrive too late for me—I feel that my hours are numbered; and I would not willingly have you left in ignorance of what no one but myself can relate—how it happens that my life has been preserved thus long, and passed in this remote region. Let me, then, profit by the interval of strength which may not again be vouchsafed me, to say a few words on the subject of my strangely-chequered fate. I find that you are acquainted with the leading particulars of my early life, and I am, therefore, spared the pain of retracing the dark steps of my passage from private discontents to political heart-burnings, from disgust with the existing state of things in the world to doubts of a ruling Providence, thence to the dreams and the theories of misguided enthusiasm, and to that infidel philosophy which teaches the perfectibility of what God himself has pronounced sinful and *imperfect*. The transition from these was easy to that mad step which sealed my disgrace as a soldier. I am not writing to one who stands in need of admonition on this head, yet I cannot avoid remarking a truth which bitter experience has taught me—that to the defects and shortcomings of my education may be attributed much of the evil and misery of my after-life. Born with a disposition in no common degree ardent and aspiring, endowed with those keen susceptibilities

and those lofty desires which are, in their own nature, calculated to inspire discontent with a world that affords nothing to satisfy them in their full extent, I was educated as though that world were to be my all. The mystery of existence was never unfolded to eyes which soon learned to perceive the contradictions and anomalies that revealed truth alone can solve. When sickening at the wickedness of mankind, at the errors of kings and rulers, at the monstrous disparity of human fortunes, at the prosperity of the guilty and the base, my inquiries and my reasonings were sternly checked, not answered. I was not referred to the word of God, not told of the curse of sin lying on the earth, not warned of the inborn wickedness of every son of Adam. I was not made to see that worldly prosperity was never meant or held out as a reward for virtue—that this life must necessarily be a state of trial, to prevent its enjoyments becoming a snare; nor do I remember that any one of my declamations on the rights of man was ever met by the only fitting argument—that it is the will of God that no two things or persons in this world ever shall be perfectly equal, and that it is his command that every man shall be content with the portion assigned him, and submissive to rulers as the appointed delegates of that authority without which society could not subsist. No one ever pointed out to me the errors of that false philosophy which pretends to exalt man by inculcating discontent with the arrangements of Providence, and jealousy of all placed above him in the

scale of social being. Things were defended because they *were*, not with arguments shewing *why* they were, nor were the errors incident to the best of institutions distinguished from the institutions themselves. In short, the only life-giving principle of thought and action was never infused into my young mind—religion was taught me as a task alone.

“ That time of wild dreaming and of political frenzy is now gone by, yet may England but be slumbering, for aught the wisest can tell, on the verge of the volcano; and the voice of one to whom experience gives a right to speak can attest, that if ever the high-born and high-minded of the land be again seduced into those wild speculations which pave the path to revolution, one great procuring cause of this will prove to be, that religion has made too small, and worldliness too large a part of their education—that those who have instructed them have been unmindful or unaware of the truth, that religion, in an ardent character, is the only fit basis alike of sound philosophy and of enlightened loyalty.

“ I need not dwell upon the after-events of my career. Urged on by desperation, after my renouncement by my family—and by the family of one of whom, even at this distant time, I have no strength to write—I rushed into excesses which I would not willingly recal. You have heard that I was a prisoner in La Force—that I effected my escape—that I paid *one* final visit to the shores of Britain. I could not go into exile without one last look at a being whom my own

actions had caused to be torn from me. Her own father had written to tell me that she was married to another, and I resolved to see her once more, to upbraid and bid her an eternal farewell. It was a cruel resolve, but I carried it into effect, yet left its worst half unexecuted. I could not upbraid or curse that broken-hearted girl ; but when I tore myself from our brief and distracted interview, I believe I was more of a madman than many who lie chained in Bedlam.

“ I can think calmly, as befits a man on the brink of another world, on all subjects but this one. Even now, the memory of Eleanor Wentworth sends a pang of agony to my heart. I have but to thank Heaven that she did not linger in her misery ;—an English newspaper acquainted me that the murder I had wrought was consummated, not many months after I reached America. But, Guy, when I succeeded in learning your tale — how different a tale from mine!—I inwardly vowed that *another* Eleanor should not pine in the wasting anguish of the heart for another Clifton, if I could avert her doom.

“ I can give no distinct account of the first few years of my residence in this country. I only know that after I learned the last fatal intelligence, I believed that I had no more to do with existence, and resolved to free myself from its burden. My attempt on my own life was forcibly prevented, and for many a day after, I was bereft of my reason. I recovered, at last, to find myself the inmate of a man whose memory I

revere as an ornament to his species. He was a merchant of Philadelphia, by name George Conway. His only son had been in Paris previous to my incarceration—had been a prisoner, and was liberated and supplied with the means of escape by me. Returned to his native country, he had discovered me, it matters not to relate how, and brought me to his father's house. He died, worn out in constitution by the horrors and privations of his French prison, before I recovered the use of my senses, but to his noble-minded parent I owe it that I have been preserved from dying the death of one hopeless alike of this world and of the next. He combated my stern and desperate misanthropy, and almost forcibly detained me with him, to supply, as he said, the place of his lost son. It was not long thus : he, too, died, and having no near relations, left me heir to the bulk of his property--no splendid inheritance, but more than sufficient for me. With this, more than ever wearied of existence, I retired to these woods, then almost unexplored, and as I had long before renounced my country, and had never been known in America by any other name than Hammond, not to mention that the Conways left no family who could recal my history, it is not surprising that it proved impossible to trace me after the lapse of so many years.

“ You have heard me say that calmer and holier thoughts have, at last, come to visit me in my solitude. The pride of false philosophy, the gloom of dark misanthropy, too long held dominion

over my mind, but to one who has lived and sinned among the throng of men, there is something in the magnificence, the breathing loneliness of nature, in itself calculated to lead to purer and better feelings ; and the living and life-giving spirit of the God of Nature came to speak peace to that heart whose ashes, calcined by the fires of remorse and despair, no human power could ever have restored to the functions of life again. The dying words of my noble, my *Christian* benefactor, recurred to me—I recalled his last prayer for light to arise on my darkness—the Bible, which was his parting gift, became my companion, and light did arise at length.

“ Since that time I have, in your own words, ‘ recognised the true end of existence.’ And though mine was passed in seclusion, yet I trust it has not passed unmindful of the welfare of those dependent on me. Yet at times, of late years—as the very recollection of my youth, with its fiery passions, its sins, and its sorrows, passed into the dim and shadowy region of far-off memories—a longing has visited my mind to look upon the face of some one of my kindred again. I fancied this an empty dream, yet it has pleased God to realize it. His hand it was, my beloved nephew, that guided you and me to our meeting in the forest. I would it had pleased him to permit us to know each other a little longer; but against that dispensation I may not repine—I, so undeserving of the least of his bounties. I will console myself with the reflection, that, guilty as

I have been, it has been granted me to become the means of bestowing happiness on those who so well deserve it; and that, after the conclusion of my long and stormy day, I shall leave some behind me, who, while they blame the errors, may yet feel tenderness for the memory of—

“ ROWLAND FITZ-HAMMOND CLIFTON.”

“ And it was for this—for this,” exclaimed Clifton, as in emotion almost too great for any collected thought, he concluded the letter of his uncle, “ it was for *this* that my blind and ungrateful heart dared to murmur against the Almighty hand which brought me hither!”

It may easily be conjectured that no time was lost by Guy in obeying this unexpected summons. He only delayed setting off long enough to write a few lines to Lord Clifton, to Mary, and to *Eleanor*, for now the prohibition of their intercourse could remain in force no longer. It afterwards came to his knowledge that none of these letters reached their destination, the packet in which they were despatched being lost in crossing the Atlantic.

During the latter part of his journey, his anxiety became intense. All the warmest feelings of his heart had been aroused by his uncle’s letter, and by this sudden and extraordinary discovery of a relative on whom his thoughts so long had dwelt, with an interest which he now felt inclined to regard as in some sort prophetic—a discovery which placed his character in a light so interesting, only to erect the barrier of the

grave between them. It was, therefore, with a sensation of deep thankfulness, that on his arrival he learnt that his uncle was still alive, and anxiously expecting him.

He was instantly ushered to his apartment. Rowland Clifton raised himself in his bed as the door opened, looked eagerly towards it, then, sinking back again, while a gleam of joy kindled up his whole countenance, exclaimed—"Now, thank God, I can die in peace!"

From that moment to his death, which happened about a week after, his nephew never left him. All that could be done was fulfilled, to smooth his dying passage to the grave. There was a medical man belonging to that remote settlement, who was assiduous in his attendance; but the disease lay beyond the reach of art. And though no man of God was there, to lead the prayers of the departing penitent, though he had lived "where never bells had knolled to church," yet assuredly that God who *is* wherever there is a human heart to seek him in sincerity and truth, was not unmindful of the humble petitions which ascended from the couch of the repentant and chastened prodigal to his throne of grace and mercy.

His last words had intimated a desire that he should be buried beneath a singularly beautiful chesnut-tree, which grew upon a hillock not far from his house. "There will," he said, "be neither name nor monument to mark my grave, and I would have it so. That stately tree is monument sufficient." There, accordingly, his

grave was dug; and Guy Clifton, in the absence of a clergyman, himself read the solemn and beautiful burial-service of the English church, standing on the brink of that grave, in which his hands laid the head of his uncle's coffin. But, perhaps, few proud monuments have been watered with more tears—few hallowed by more real and heart-felt sorrow, than this forest tomb. The simple and attached negroes of the estate, to whom their deceased master had been a father and an instructor, filled the air with their lamentations, as the earth closed over his head. The last years of a life, so devious and so wild, had been bestowed in sowing that good seed which is twice blessed, alike to the receiver and the giver. And as the last sod was clapped down upon the grave of him who was to sleep there so far from his kindred dust, and as the eyes of Clifton dwelt upon the beautiful tree, which was his only monument, bending over the spot in all the rich luxuriance of its summer-foliage, he remembered and consoled himself with the reflection, that, unknown and unnoted by man as it must remain, yet the last resting-place of the pardoned and accepted Christian would be “marked of God.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“ All yet seems well, and if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.”

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

“ These have we named—on life's rough sea they sail,
With many a prosperous—many an adverse gale !
Where passions soon, like powerful winds, will rage ;
While wearied prudence with their strength engage ;
Then each in turn shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task :
And what that help, what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to shew ;
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore ;
As Spenser his, but not with Spenser's oar.”

CRABBE.

THE will which Rowland Clifton left behind him, directed his Carolinian property to be immediately converted into money, out of which a provision, graduated according to age and strength, was to be made for his negroes, all of whom were liberated. The process was a speedier one in America than it might have been in our land of embarrassed fortunes; and, in a surprisingly short time, Clifton found himself at liberty to quit the

country. He could not, without much emotion, leave what had been his uncle's house, of whom he carried with him several memorials—his collection of books, a valuable though not extensive one, and various little relics, which assumed a value in his eyes from their connexion with the history of their owner; amongst others, a miniature portrait of a beautiful female, having enclosed in the setting behind, two braids of hair, light brown and black, with the interwoven initials, E. W. and R. F. C.

At last the day arrived when Clifton left Charlestown, after one mournful visit to the lonely grave of his uncle Elliott; and embarked, amid the kind adieux and good wishes of all who had known him there. His passage was a singularly rapid one; and from Liverpool, where he landed, he wrote again to Lord Clifton and Mary; then leaving the bulkier part of his luggage behind him, placed himself in the Glasgow mail, on his way to Edinburgh.

By one of those singular coincidences, which sometimes occur in real life, although the author of a fictitious narrative hardly dare avail himself of them, it was on the morning of the *24th of October*, that, leaving Glasgow for Edinburgh, Clifton found himself seated in the mail, with poor Faust consigned to the coachman's care. There was only one other inside passenger, an officer of Dragoons, who, previous to the departure of the coach, sat with his head thrust out at one window, bawling out some directions touching the safety of his carpet-bag, in a voice familiar

to Clifton's ear, though the person from whom it proceeded was taller and stouter than his recollections pictured him. At length, however, he drew in his head, as the horses sprang forward, with a jerk which dislodged his cap, and displayed the good-humoured physiognomy of Bob Livingstone. His recognition of his old friend was instantaneous, and full of delight, and Clifton very shortly detailed to him his late adventures and their result. The joy of Bob was great, and his congratulations vehement and heartfelt.

“I haven't heard anything for years that gave me such pleasure, Clifton. Wish you joy, with all my soul. You deserve your luck, and that is more than can be said for most of us. By Jove, how glad I am! If it were only for the disappointment it will cause our right reverend Aunts, who have made you out to be everything that was base since you were forced to leave England. There they sit, the old cats! abusing poor dear, dear little Ellen, and extolling Clara, because she happened to fall in love with a fellow who could afford to marry. Heaven forgive me! how often have I praised you up to the skies wholly and solely for the pleasure of seeing Aunt Elizabeth get into a passion!”

“I am deeply indebted for your championship,” replied Clifton, laughing. “I was delighted to hear of Clara's marriage—she is a charming girl, and a more honourable or better-hearted fellow than Oswald does not breathe. Where are they at present?”

“They came home last May,” replied Bob,

"from a tour on the Continent, which they made after their marriage, and since then they have been paying a round of wedding visits to all the kith and kin on both sides. We had them at Ferneylee, and I never saw two people happier. Oswald worships the ground Clara walks on, I think, and she is so fond of him, and looking prettier than ever. She sat for her miniature as Ariel to Mrs. James Robertson, the loveliest sylphlike thing you ever beheld. Ellen was with them at Ferneylee, and now they are at Cargarth with the old don and his lady, who pressed my aunt and Ellen to pay them a visit at the same time. But no, Mrs. Falconar's *feelings* couldn't stand it, and because she could not go, poor Eleanor was denied the pleasure of being with her sister. Thank goodness, Clifton, you have come to release her from the life she leads, for I often think she will be worried into a consumption. You have no notion of it."

"Have I not, Bob?" exclaimed Clifton. He paused a moment. "That is a subject," he added, "that I am not equal to discussing, even with a friend like you. I can only say that if the devotion of a whole life will atone to my Eleanor for what she has endured on my account, she——" Again he paused, abruptly. "Where do Oswald and Clara live?" he added, after a few minutes' silence.

"The nabob bought a very pretty place called Springwoodlee, about twelve miles from Cargarth, and settled it on his son. It is said that, when the old member for the county drops off, and he

can't last much longer, Marmaduke will receive a requisition to come forward, and as he is a sound Tory, and a very clever fellow, I hope with all my heart he will. The old nabob has been very handsome and liberal in his settlements, though it is whispered that he was not a little disappointed that his son did not rather prefer the pretty heiress of Burlindean."

"Ah! Lady Helen Grant?"

"The same, now Lady Helen Drummond Cochrane. She married her cousin Drummond of ours about ten months ago. He has sold out, and they are living at Burlindean as happy as a pair of turtle-doves. We are going to lose another fellow in the same way, but there will be no great moan made for him. Anthony Wellwood. He marches off with Lady Patricia Malcolm—Lady Susan's sister, you know."

"Indeed! I suppose that is a very satisfactory match?"

"You may swear that, or he wouldn't have got leave to make it. Sir Anthony holds the reins pretty tightly. Of course you haven't heard about his sister's marriage either?"

"What! Miss Wellwood? No. Who is the gentleman?"

"The happy man," replied Bob, with a sneer, "is a person whom I dare say you would never have guessed—our old acquaintance Aylesmore."

"Lord Aylesmore!" exclaimed Clifton, in amazement. "Is it possible! He always seemed rather to dislike her, and lost no opportunity of sneering at her on all occasions."

"Ay, but, my good fellow, the young lady had a great deal of money left her, not very long ago, by some old rich godmother who lost her own daughter, and made Miss Wellwood her heiress. That alters the case a little. Some time ago, Aylesmore tried to mend some flaws in his property by the fortune of a great English heiress, a perfect horror of ugliness they say, but she very wisely would none of him. So, I suppose, finding that Miss Wellwood was more easily pleased, and more presentable, if not so rich, he took her by way of a pis-aller. They had a splendid wedding about a month ago."

"I pity her, from my soul!" said Clifton. "Aylesmore is a man of talent without principle—an adept in the worst knowledge of mankind—a worn-out and satiated man of pleasure—one who almost disbelieves in the existence of female virtue. He cannot love—he has long since exhausted the capability of loving. I do most sincerely pity her!"

"So do not I," replied Bob. "Your pity is wasted, my dear fellow. You might pity Ellen Falconar if she were the wife of such a man, but you needn't pity Matilda Wellwood. She married him to be a Viscountess, with a reversionary dukedom in prospect, which he has—no very distant prospect either. She has got all she wanted, and they will be a very fashionable couple, and not care a straw for each other."

"She will be a miserable woman, I can tell you, Livingstone. Aylesmore could make any

woman miserable, for if he do not wound her through her affections, he will through her pride."

"Ah, well!" replied Bob, "let her drink as she has brewed. His character is no secret, so she has run with her eyes open into the trap because it was baited with a coronet. By-the-bye, apropos to marriages, do you know—ha! ha! ha! —I do believe Dick Cousins will make it out with little Kitty Ireland one of these odd days, whenever they can afford to commit matrimony. A good joke, a'n't it?"

"Why so? In my opinion it is an excellent plan. I always thought it would come to that."

"Did you, faith? Well, I shall dance at Dick's wedding con amore. Little Hibernia will make him a charming wife."

"You seem to be all matrimonially inclined since I left you. Your beautiful sister, Miss Livingstone, is married too."

"Yes, I am the only one at liberty, and I don't mean to put on the noose for awhile yet. No notion of a whole family walking off the course! I was half thinking of trying to supplant you with my cousin Ellen, but I took warning by the fate of your old rival, Charteris, in time to save my heart. By the way, he has consoled himself with another love since his final rejection, a girl with red hair, as ugly as sin. How d'ye do?—how d'ye do?" shouted Bob, suddenly interrupting himself, and thrusting his person half-way out of the window, as the coach whirled past a party of equestrians, male and female, who were galloping along the road.

"Some of the Forbes Grahams!" said he, as he drew his head back; "Harriette and Bella, (very odd these girls don't *go off*, isn't it? They're nice little souls!) and several other people. I see a fellow in the party whom our friend, my cousin's lady, Mrs. Balmayne, has been trying hard last winter to catch for her daughter. You remember Agnes Balmayne?"

"Perfectly," replied Clifton, with an involuntary sigh.

"Ay, I see what you are thinking of. There's no doubt she was very fond of poor Falconar. Many a time I used to be inclined to laugh a little at it, when I saw her mother fidgeting to keep him from dancing with her. But, poor little soul, it would have made your heart ache to see her the spring after his death, when the mother used to drag her about to parties; and she looked so woe-begone, so spiritless! Poor lassie!" Bob paused, and cleared his voice. "However, Clifton, I don't think these soft, simple kind of people remember anything very long. Last winter she seemed quite changed; and, indeed, rather got into a flirtation with a young fellow of the name of Smith, a lieutenant in the — regiment, which was in the Castle. Her mother didn't like that a bit, and kept up a constant manœuvring to attract this man I was speaking of."

"And who is he?" inquired Clifton.

"He rejoices in the name of Charles James Fox Buchan," replied Bob—"a bitter Whig, as you will be at no loss to guess. His father is one

of the great Glasgow merchants, who are buying up all the land in the west country now-a-days. The son made a considerable figure in Edinburgh last winter, and got himself not a little laughed at, *sub rosâ*. But Mrs. Balmayne would swallow any pill, if it were well gilded. Only I should think Mr. Charles James Fox would look higher; all your Whigs love grandeur dearly. He is a disagreeable brute; so, in charity to poor little Agnes, I hope the scheme may prove a bad spec."

By this time the stately bulk of Arthur's Seat was visible over the wide and rich champaign between them and Edinburgh. With what varied emotions did Clifton gaze on that magnificent landmark—that beacon which many a returning exile has hailed with rapture, as he marked it first rising, between him and the sky, overshadowing the ancient city of his fathers! Then the Castle Rock stood forth from the dimness of distance; the Calton Hill, with its crown of monuments; the old steeple of St. Giles'; the dome of the Register House; the white lines of the New Town; the dark irregular pile of the Old; gleaming in the red radiance of the setting sun. At last the mail dashed rattling and thundering into Princes-street, and Clifton felt his very heart throb as if it would have burst his bosom, and the tears of irresistible emotion gush into his eyes. He could almost have knelt down and kissed the pavement of Edinburgh, in the rapture of his return.

It was almost dark when Clifton, with his faithful companion, Faust, stood upon the road

opposite to Mrs. Falconar's house. An irresistible impulse prompted him to pause by the parapet wall, exactly before it, in the very spot where he had stood, on the early morning of that day, when he had quitted Edinburgh for London. He leant against the wall, for, at that instant, he trembled so violently, that he could scarcely stand, and fixed his eyes upon the middle window of the drawing-room. The curtains still remained undrawn, and by the flashing fire-light—for the candles had not been lit—he could distinctly perceive a female figure sitting in the window, her head resting on her hand. Turning his eyes behind him, he distinguished the revolving beacon on Inchkeith, which at that moment was slowly enlarging to the eye, in the far distance. He looked to the window again, and a brighter gleam of the fire shewed him the outline of the head and neck of the person sitting within. He was not mistaken. It was Eleanor—his own Eleanor; at that moment sadly watching the light, wherewith so many associations were entwined, and thinking of the many, many weary years that might elapse ere she should gaze upon it again, in the company of her lover.

She was alone, for Mrs. Falconar had gone to dine with Mrs. Moray—a party from which Eleanor had, with some difficulty, excused herself, for on the 24th of October she did not feel fortitude enough to venture on mingling in any society. Her mournful thoughts were uncheered by one ray of hope; the letter of Clifton, as we have seen, having been lost, and her heart was

filled with memories of the past and the departed. Suddenly the door bell rang loudly, and Eleanor started and trembled, she knew not why, except that it was an unusual sound at that hour. A rapid step hurried up the stair-case. It sounded, she could almost have fancied, like a well-known step ; but alas, that could not be ! At that instant the door flew open — a dog sprang into the room, followed by a gentleman, who rushed towards her, and clasped her in his arms. It was Clifton—Clifton himself, unchanged as when they parted—her own, her faithful lover ! That hour of unutterable happiness might have compensated for years of anguish :

“ Had they not then, for all their tears,
The day of woe—the sleepless night,
For all their pain, and grief and fears,
An over payment of delight ?”

CONCLUSION.

AND now, gentle reader, ere we draw the curtain which veils the unexplored future, over the history of those whose fortunes we have followed thus far, let us linger yet a few brief minutes, to take a parting glance at our *dramatis personæ*. On the fateful 24th of October, then, two years after the day which restored Guy Clifton to Eleanor, the red beams of a beautiful sunset were visiting many of them, in many and varied situations. They found Lady Aylesmore, no longer the blooming girl—the spoilt and haughty child of cloudless prosperity—but the pale, calm, London woman of fashion, veiling the indignant throbings of a proud and wounded spirit, beneath the quiet undemonstrative exterior of high breeding; and forming, at that time, one of a brilliant party at a brilliant country-seat. Whilst her lord, whom she had not seen for four months, was on his way home from a yachting expedition to Norway, with a party of fashionable roués, his chosen associates at Crockford's, and, like him-

self, equally remarkable for devotedness to the wives of other men, and neglect of their own. They found Lady Haslingden in one of her lord's magnificent country-houses, weeping bitterly in her own boudoir, over a newspaper containing an announcement of the marriage of William Montenaye, her injured lover, and feeding her tears from a source of still greater bitterness—that of haughty resentment against her husband, who had just been reproaching her with great severity for permitting the attentions of a young nobleman, then a visitor in the house.

The same evening sun, but in another country, shone upon Mary Lavington, as with a countenance beaming with peace and serenity she softly kissed her two lovely sleeping children, and stole from their chamber to await the return of her husband. The generous friendship of Guy Clifton had not only assisted Mr. Lavington to rescue himself from his most pressing embarrassments, but had procured him a highly lucrative foreign consulate, a sphere admirably adapted to his talents, and where he had every prospect of gradually, but surely, paying off his debts, and acquiring independence for his family.

It shone upon Mrs. Peter Balmayne, reading a letter from her sister, wherein were detailed the triumphs of Lady Aylesmore's London campaign, and the beauties of Lady Patricia Wellwood and her diamonds. It shone upon Sir Anthony, reading a list of John's Oxford debts, and varying the grateful theme by a perusal of the "graceful Richard's tailor's bill for the last two years,

which the injured priest of the graces, despairing of payment from the young gentleman himself, had just inclosed to his papa, and whose total amounted to a sum rather more startling than agreeable to behold. It shone upon Aunt Elizabeth, writing a letter of congratulation to Lady Glenmarley, on the birth of a son and heir; and upon Aunt Annie, holding a deep and solemn consultation with her man of business, the "pleasant" Mr. Brisbane, touching the making of her will, which will was intended to benefit, not Harry Falconar, the only one of her nephews' or nieces' children who really required money, but, on the principle of giving most to those who possess most, with the exception of some trifling legacies, devised her fortune, after Aunt Elizabeth's death, to Lady Glenmarley and Mrs. Forbes Graham. It shone upon Grace Moray, making up a muslin dress, wherein she hoped to captivate a rich elderly nabob, whom she expected to meet the following day at Colonel Richardson's. In this laudable object it will gratify the reader to learn that the young lady shortly afterwards succeeded.

Nor were the bright sunbeams unmindful of Mrs. Falconar's drawing-room, where they fell upon the forms of that lady in the best of good-humours, of Colonel and Mrs. Richardson, Miss Hay, and Harry. This party were discussing the subject of looking out for a house for the Cliftons, who meant to pass some of the spring months in Edinburgh, taking Cargarth on their way, where they and the young Oswalds were to

spend the Christmas, the latter couple accompanying them to Edinburgh, which they very frequently visited. Harry, too, was detailing to the Colonel his plans for the future—how it was settled by his guardians' advice that he should go into Mr. Anstruther's office, and how Marmaduke Oswald had promised him all his business when he had passed Writer to the Signet.

These same sunbeams visited Mosspatrick to find its lady in a transport of wrath and mortification, and its good-humoured master fairly at his wits' end. Mr. Charles James Fox Buchan, after having earned for himself the sobriquet of "Rejected Addresses," from the number of refusals which he had received from young ladies of station superior to his own, had at last, by some means or other, been manœuvred into a proposal for Agnes, by her indefatigable mamma. This proposal the poor girl had been driven into a state of desperation by being commanded to accept. She had for some time past maintained a clandestine correspondence with Lieutenant Smith, and the result was, that on the day before Mr. Buchan, in consequence of her mamma's encouragement, was expected at the house, she was reported missing! On the afternoon in question, just as Mr. Balmayne had returned from a vain pursuit of the fugitives, and entered his own private room with a heavy heart, in order to look at his business correspondence,—his consolation under all afflictions,—his lady followed him thither, armed with a letter which had that instant arrived from Agnes, in the character of Mrs.

Smith, imploring forgiveness. The placable father read it, and pronounced it as his opinion that “they must make the best of it, and forgive poor Aggy, and Smith, who was a very good, honest lad.” This decision added fuel to the flame of Mrs. Balmayne’s anger, and snatching up, as she thought, the letter from the table, with a magnanimous declaration that “*she*, at least, had no idea of doing anything so very soft as to forgive the deceitful hussy,” she “heaved it i’ the fire, in wrath that nicht!” Alas! it was not Agnes’ letter which in her blind fury she had thrown a prey to the flames, but—as the horror-struck exclamation of her husband too late informed her—the minutes of a road-meeting, at which Mr. Balmayne had been convener, at which some large sums had been voted for various purposes; which paper he had already detained too long, and which the clerk to the trustees had just written entreating him to send back. The consternation of this discovery, despair at the irreparable loss, and perplexity in what way to account to the clerk for the disappearance of the important document, were such, and so intense, as far to outweigh, in the bosom of Mr. Balmayne, any feelings connected with wife or daughter, and gave rise to a storm of invective, reproach, and unavailing regret, which would not have been called forth by the elopement of the whole family in a body. Mr. Brisbane, a few days after, on learning the story from a mutual friend, *ha-ha’d* over it with such vehement delight, that, being at the time engaged in

revising Aunt Annie's will, which his head clerk had just finished, ready for the good lady's signature, he threw an inkstand over upon the parchment, and so completely destroyed the precious document, that he was necessitated to buy a new stamp out of his own privy purse, and have the whole will re-written.

That setting sun shone, too, on Clara and Marmaduke Oswald, slowly returning from a ride along the banks of Cargarth water. They were at that time on a visit to their parents, and their lovely little boy, still under two years old, was in the drawing-room with his grandmother, eagerly watching for mamma's and papa's return, from a window, whilst Lady Glendinning and one of her own little girls sat upon a pile of cushions playing with his baby sister, a beautiful infant of three months. The inhabitants of many a cottage had come to their doors that evening, as the young couple rode past, to speak a few words to "the young laird an' their ain young leddy, fair fa' her bonny face!" They had met Captain Drummond Cochrane driving Lady Helen in her pony phaeton, had looked in upon Katie Anderson, who, since her mother's death, a year before, continued to occupy the old cottage alone, but cheerful and contented—had reined in their horses by the gate of the Manse, to converse, for a short while, with old Mr. Cameron—and had just exchanged a cordial salutation with Tam Howison, whom they met trudging home from his woodland labours—and as they wended their homeward way, they were talking with delight

of the approaching Christmas visit from Eleanor and Guy Clifton, who, after making a tour in Germany and Italy, subsequent to their marriage, had now been settled for half a year at a beautiful place which they had purchased in the North of England, very near one of the lakes.

Nowhere was the sun sinking more beautifully than behind the mountains, and over the lovely Mere, in whose vicinity stood the abode where we are about to visit our heroine, ere bidding her farewell. This old-fashioned manorial house, with its white gables, rambling passages, and windows opening to the ground, covered with fruit-trees and odoriferous creepers, and standing in the midst of a wilderness of rose-beds, was the very habitation for the poet, and the worshipper of nature. Its situation was somewhat solitary, in a nook among the romantic hills, which nearly enclosed it on three sides, while in front, the trees which embowered it were more widely planted, to permit the green and shrubby lawn to command a view of the lake. It looked what it was—the abode of stillness and serenity, and refined literary leisure; removed from the turmoil of the world, without being lost in a wilderness.

Here, then, sat Eleanor Clifton, in a drawing-room, arranged with that chaste elegance which is the perfection of good taste, and opening into a library crowded with books, and ornamented by many fine busts and casts from the antique—the writing-table covered with manuscripts, and other tokens that the hours spent there by its proprietor were not idle ones. On the other side,

this drawing-room opened into a small, but beautifully-filled conservatory, which sent forth an atmosphere of sweet scents into the apartment. At the present moment, Eleanor had just begged her husband to ring the bell, in order to summon the attendant of her baby, whom she had been rolling and playing with on the cushions of an ottoman.

“Stay, Ellen,” said Guy, “let me have another kiss of my boy, before you dismiss him?” He took up the beautiful infant, on whose baby face, although not more than four months had passed over his head, the lordly impress of his father’s race was already legibly stamped, and who bore the cherished name of *Alfred*, and imprinted a tender kiss on his velvet cheek.

The baby was sent away, and Eleanor and Guy advanced towards a window, to watch the effect of the setting sunbeams on the lake. Clifton passed his arm around her slender waist, as he leant against the window-frame, and turned his eyes on the lovely prospect; then rested them upon her countenance, in all the repose of that perfect love with which his whole heart was filled. Neither of them spoke, for their minds were full of many thoughts and many emotions, but chastened and pervaded by that calm, which flows even from the recollection of past sorrow, when connected with the Christian’s trust. That setting sun which beheld them, blest as they had never dared to hope, in each other’s love—that setting sun was beaming on the grave of Alfred;

yet if, as they felt, the ineffaceable memory of that loss must diffuse a sadness over every joy which was given to their future lot, it, in like manner, must cast a beam of hope over every sorrow incident to mortality—connecting, as it did, the loves, and the trials, and the partings of Earth, with the unchanging truth, and perfect peace, and undecaying happiness of Heaven.

THE END.





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